

CONSTANTIA;
OR, A
TRUE PICTURE
OF
HUMAN LIFE,

Represented in
Fifteen Evening Conversations,
After the Manner of Boccace.

V O L. II.

To which is prefixed,
A Short DISCOURSE on Novel Writing.



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VOL. II.

A Short Discourse on Novel Writing.

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TABLE

OF

CONTENTS

TO THE

SECOND VOLUME.

I ntroduction	Page 1
<i>The Charm; or, the Vindictive Mother-in-law. An affecting story in humble life</i>	31
<i>The Faithful Shepherd; or, the Tartar Prince. An Oriental history</i>	70
<i>Female Arrogance; or, the Fatal Inclination. A French history founded on facts</i>	108
<i>The Ambitious Father; or, Virtue in distress. A Spanish history</i>	149
A 2	The

<i>The Reconciliation ; or, the Husband un-</i> <i>mask'd. An entertaining story from the</i> <i>French</i>	183
<i>The Progress of Vice ; or, the Unnatural</i> <i>Parent. A true history from the</i> <i>Spanish</i>	306
<i>The Fatal Credulity ; or, the French Ma-</i> <i>gician. A singular piece of secret, and</i> <i>at the same time true history</i>	346
<i>Conclusion</i>	382

INTRODUCTION.



HE loss of their evening entertainments was very much regretted by lady Constantia and her whole family, more especially after Mr. Beaumont set out for London, in order to regulate an affair of importance, which obliged him to be absent for about two months. The young ladies endeavoured to divert themselves with reading, but those conversations had given them so nice and correct a taste, that they could by no means go through the fatigue of perusing long romances, in which chimerical descriptions are the principal beauties, the characters strained beyond all probability, and where there is hardly any thing to be met with that can inform the understanding, or give the passions a right turn. They were disgusted with those extravagant sallies in the Spanish and Italian authors, that so often carry away both the writer and the reader from the proper business of the work into tedious and trivial digressions, calculated purely to display the wit and learning of the author out of season and to no purpose, and they grew tired of those fine writers among the French, who from an affectation of delicacy and sublimity of sentiment, spin the thread of their thoughts to such a length that the force of it is quite destroyed,

VOL. II. B

2 INTRODUCTION.

stroyed, or deliver it in so quaint and abrupt a way that the sense is not easily discerned. As for lady Constantia and Mrs. Anguish, they were plagued to death with criticisms, so that when the weather hindered them from walking, their evenings hung heavy upon their hands, and they heartily wished for some agreeable company that might give a new turn to their diversions, and restore that spirit and vivacity, the remembrance of which served only to throw them more and more into the vapours.

It was not long however, before an accident relieved them from this state of indolence, not without creating them in general, and Mrs. Anguish in particular some disquietude. This proceeded from a letter written by Beaumont to lady Constantia, about six weeks after his arrival in London, in which he informed her that Mr. Anguish was returned from Spain, and that his servant had been the day before at the house of a maiden lady, whose name was Olivia his near relation, and who had always professed the greatest friendship for his lady; that nobody knew the motive or meaning of his return any more than of his departure; that however he would make it his business to get the best light into the affair he could, and would hasten his return into the country, that they might be as early and as fully apprized of the truth as possible. Lady Constantia, who was at first only a little confounded, as people naturally are on the news of an unexpected event, grew more and more uneasy, especially when a post day or more had passed without bringing any fresh intelligence from Beaumont. Charlotte and Calista were in a manner frightened, they had conceived

INTRODUCTION. 3

ceived such ideas of a Spanish husband, that they looked upon their cousin as destined to a state of martyrdom, and were perpetually importuning Constantia to send that lady out of the way to save her life, at which she sometimes smiled, and at others looked very grave, without returning any answer.

As for Mrs. Anguish, tho' she was extremely affected at first, even to such a degree as to shed tears, yet by degrees it wore off; the next day she appeared tolerably quiet, and the day following her spirits were perfectly composed. This surprized them all so, that when they met in the little parlour after supper, lady Constantia could not refrain from telling her, that tho' she was well pleased to observe such a serenity in her countenance, yet she could not help thinking it a little strange, and would be glad if she would communicate the cause of it, and enter at the same time into the character of Olivia. Mrs. Anguish said that her chearfulness was the pure effects of her innocence, that she was not conscious to herself of her having ever had a thought, from the time she became Mr. Anguish's wife, which she desired to conceal from him; that the news of his departure, and the notion of his displeasure came together, and were founded upon a very cold reserved letter which her ladyship had seen. But owned however she was in some measure surprized at her own indifference, since after the first night, when this unexpected intelligence created some emotion, she had considered it often without the least disturbance, and that at this time the thought of it gave her rather pleasure than pain. As to the lady that has been mentioned, continued she, I

4 INTRODUCTION.

can bring all I know of her history and character into a very narrow compass.

Olivia is somewhat turned of fifty, yet is still extremely handsome, very polite, and engaging in her manners, and with a very easy fortune is in all appearance at least, the happiest, and most contented person in the world. She is the daughter of a person of great distinction, who, as he had several children, was not able to do any thing for her very considerable; but Olivia's grandmother leaving her three thousand pounds, she came to London when she was about twenty, and lived with an aunt of her's, who was married to a very eminent merchant in the city. It was there that the gentleman, then at the head of the house which now belongs to Mr. Anguish, saw and fell in love with her. His affairs were not then so settled as to make it convenient for him to marry, at least till he had been in Spain, with which he acquainted Olivia, promising her in a short space to return again to England, and to make such proposals to her relations as might render their marriage suitable in all respects. Olivia told him, that her fortune would be in a few months in her power, that considering how many sisters she had, and how well she was provided for, she could not in reason expect any thing from her father, and therefore if three thousand pounds was worth his acceptance, she was content to marry and go with him; that perhaps this sum might be at that juncture particularly useful to him, and to make it the more so, she was willing their nuptials should be celebrated the day after she became of age, and that the money should be paid him without the ceremony of a settlement.

INTRODUCTION. 5

I have often heard Mr. Anguish say, that his partner was the dupe of his own Spanish notions. Whether it was that he doubted so warm a passion would not be lasting, whether he was unwilling to be so much obliged to a woman, for at that time her proposal would have been attended with most advantageous consequences, or whether his conscience would not suffer him to espouse a lady of consideration without the consent of her family, so it was, that he returned to Spain; and tho' he fancied things might have been adjusted much sooner, yet it was more than three years before he could fulfill his promise to Olivia. He then came over, found that she had slighted two very great offers, and that she was infinitely more struck with his behaviour, than any of her relations, who opposed the match, tho' to no purpose. While the marriage articles were preparing by the lawyers, he was unfortunately seized with a pleurisy, of which he died, and left her all it was in his power to leave, which amounted to something more than five thousand pounds; and for this Mr. Anguish, about three years afterwards, agreed to pay her five hundred guineas a year during life, and to find her proper security for it in England. This conduct has raised Olivia a prodigious character with the few people that are acquainted with her story; when therefore we came over it was the first care of my husband to introduce me to that lady, and from thence, to the time of his departure, we lived in the greatest intimacy and strictest friendship.

Pray give me leave to ask you, interposed lady Constantia, how you have lived since, and upon what terms you now stand with this lady?

6 INTRODUCTION.

Upon as good as I ever did, replied Mrs. Anguish, at least I think so. Olivia sent for me to her house, delivered me the last letter I received from my husband, which I have shewed you, that came inclosed in one to her, which I likewise read, and that contained little more than this, that my appointment should be paid by the same hand, and with the same regularity as her annuity. Olivia at that time appeared very angry, and spoke of Mr. Anguish in terms, which how much soever I thought myself injured, I could scarce bear with patience. I was afterwards informed that she absolutely prohibited his writing to her, which I was very sorry for. One thing indeed surprized me, she behaved towards me upon that occasion with all the affection of a mother; but when I took my leave, desired I would not either visit or write to her any more, advising me to put myself under your protection, and gave me, as a parting token of her amity, a pearl necklace with a diamond cross, which is the most valuable thing I have.

The Saturday following, Mr. Beaumont returned from London a little before dinner time, having rode post most of the way. He told lady Constantia, and Mrs. Anguish, that her husband was returned with a purpose of being reconciled to her; that lodging over against Olivia, he heard this piece of news very early; that as soon as it was confirmed to him, he found means to be introduced to that lady, and to acquaint her he was honoured with the friendship of lady Constantia, and passed a great part of the year in her family; that having met with a very civil reception, he proceeded to mention what he had
heard,

INTRODUCTION. 7

heard, and the pleasure it gave him; upon which, Olivia told him that it was very true; that Mr. Anguish was to dine there the next day, and that in the evening she would be glad to see him. He added, that what he had farther to say would take up some time, and as strangers dined there, he would reserve it for night, the rather, because he found himself so fatigued, that he should be glad of a little repose, which was consented to, because it could not decently be refused; tho' the two ladies were under the greatest uneasiness imaginable, to be at the bottom of an affair which had so much the air of mystery, and was at the same time of so great importance.

As Mrs. Anguish appeared to be indisposed, in the afternoon the company took leave sooner than usual, and the family were met in the parlour by a little after nine o'clock, of which, when Beaumont had notice, he very speedily attended them; and lady Constantia having signified how impatient they were for his explanation of a matter, which every person in the room saw in a different light, he very roundly promised to dispell all their suspicions, and to make the whole as clear as they could wish; adding, that at the bottom it was like other things of the same nature, no more than a piece of grave extravagance, and one of those solemn scenes of folly, to which none but solid understandings are liable, and which made a man of strong parts say with great sprightliness and truth, *when we wits err we do it with a vengeance.* Mrs. Anguish always said, she knew not what had affected her husband's temper; when she is told, she will be particularly surprized.

8 INTRODUCTION.

Olivia informed me, that about a fortnight or three weeks before Mr. Anguish went last to Spain, two of her nieces came up to town, and when Mr. Anguish was there at dinner, desired they might be favoured with his lady's company to the next masquerade, to which he consented. It is very true, said Mrs. Anguish, and I remember it was with very great difficulty that he prevailed upon me to go, because of a natural dislike I always had, and still have, to that diversion. Not without cause, added Beaumont. The only reason that induced me, replied Mrs. Anguish, was my husband's telling me that he had promised I should go, and that he thought I would not make him break his word. Well, Madam, said Beaumont, you shall hear the consequences of that night's amusement, to which you went unwillingly, and by which unwittingly you excited a disturbance in his mind that has been but very lately cured. How is that possible, cried Mrs. Anguish? We went with Olivia's trustee, a man near sixty, who has children elder than I, and who is the very person employed by Mr. Anguish to pay Olivia's money and mine. That man, returned Beaumont, had no share in this adventure. That is very strange indeed, added Mrs. Anguish, for to the best of my remembrance, I spoke not to another from the time I left Olivia's house till I returned to my own. These altercations, said lady Constantia, will keep us here till midnight, let us hear Mr. Beaumont's story first, and then ask him what you will. Calista and Charlotte joining in the same request, Mrs. Anguish promised not to speak another word.

Mr.

INTRODUCTION. 9

Mr. Anguish and his lady, continued Beaumont, having dined that day by appointment at Olivia's, he took his leave about five o'clock, when Mrs. Anguish told him that they would not exceed two; the youngest of Olivia's nieces hearing this, resolved to gain an hour by setting all their watches back, which she had an opportunity of doing at the place where they put on their habits, and which was a house the corner of a street going into the Hay market. Mrs. Anguish wore the dress of a Sultana, the two young ladies were her pages, and a Spanish girl that waited on her, remarkably tall, was in the habit of a janizary. While they were dressing, Mr. Anguish came accidentally by the parlour, saw his wife unmasked with the janizary's arms round her waist, and having just stayed long enough to be sure that it was she, passed on to the place where he was going, and went from thence home about eleven o'clock. The old man she speaks of was in the habit of a Dervise, they went to the masquerade, staid there till one o'clock by their watches, then returned to Olivia's undressed, and Mrs. Anguish got home, as she thought, by a quarter after two. She was desirous of giving her husband an account of what she had seen, but he declined it, said he was indisposed with setting up, and desired they might go to bed; adding, that he did not doubt she was very agreeably entertained, to which the lady answered it was very true.

This was all that passed upon the subject, for Mr. Anguish would never hear of it, either at home or at Olivia's. He kept his disquiet entirely to himself, was more out than usual, but went less frequently to that lady's, till all things

10 INTRODUCTION.

being privately made ready, he called, when he knew Olivia was at his own house, left a letter for her with one inclosed to his wife, into whose purse he had put a hundred guineas in the morning, and an hour after set out for the port where he was to embark. The ship sailed the third day after he left London. Upon his quitting his house, he gave directions that his Spanish servants should follow him, that is, his man, his cook, two maid servants, and a black boy. He was very well pleased to find upon their arrival, that they knew nothing of any difference between him and his lady, of which he never suffered a syllable to transpire, nor in all probability would have done to his dying day, speaking of her upon all occasions with the greatest respect and tenderness. He grew weary however of business, to which the distraction of his mind contributed not a little, and finding that he had acquired more than enough to make him easy, was deliberating with himself where to retire, and how to spend the remainder of his days, after remitting to England a capital sufficient to secure Olivia's annuity and his lady's settlement.

It happened towards the close of the year, that upon one of those holidays which are celebrated with the greatest mirth, amongst the lower sort of people, he heard a great noise in his courtyard, into which the room looked where he sat reading. The moon shone very bright, and going to the window to see what was the matter, he perceived his cook playing upon a lute, and his own, and his neighbours servants dancing in antick habits. He had hardly satisfied his curiosity as to the subject of the noise, when he cast his eyes upon a figure that surprized him excessively,

INTRODUCTION. 11

sively, which was that of the janizary, who had filled him with so much uneasiness. He considered him attentively for some time, and then retiring to his fire side, recollected himself as well as he could, and called for his black boy. As soon as he entered the room, Sancho, said he, what is all this uproar? St. John's day, master, said Sancho, he is Saint they say of our parish, and all Don Lopez's servants are come to make us a visit, they are dancing in masks in the court. Mr. Anguish upon this went again to the window, and calling Sancho to him, asked him who the masks were.

That fellow, said Sancho, with the frightful face and great scymitar, whom they call the Saracen, is Don Lopez's porter, that Indian dressed with feathers is his cook, him in the pied jacket is his valet de chambre; and who is that tall Turk? said Mr. Anguish. Oh, Sir, said Sancho, that is our maid Beatrice, and she says it is the same dress with that which my lady hired for her at London, when she went to the great people's mask. Very well, said Mr. Anguish, get you gone, and bid Diego give them a ham, an English cheese, and as much wine as they can drink. Thus the great secret, about which he had tormented himself so long, came out of itself, and from that moment Mr. Anguish's temper has been so much altered, that Olivia is persuaded, from being jealous without any cause at all, hardly any thing could now make him jealous. He is so much ashamed of his infatuation, that nothing but the being restored to Olivia's good opinion could have drawn this tale from him. He has quitted his share in the house at Barcelona, has brought the best part of his effects

12 INTRODUCTION.

to England, and has teased Olivia into a promise, (if it be acceptable, as I presume it will,) to come down hither to negotiate a reconciliation with that lady, bowing to Mrs. Anguish; having as full powers as ever any minister had, with this single clause of restraint, that Mrs. Anguish shall never mention the story of the female janizary, of which he has such an apprehension, that he has procured Beatrice a good husband, that he might not be obliged to send for her over, and have her continually in his sight.

One thing I had like to have omitted, Olivia's giddy niece having told her, that she set the watches back, that lady mentioned it to him; upon which he blushed, and said it was that circumstance which determined him never to ask any questions, and consequently prevented his being set right. Olivia sent for the old gentleman out of the city while they were together, and without mentioning any of the consequences, made him enter into the history of the evening, which was a work of supererogation, since Mr. Anguish told her the next morning to take no more pains in this affair; for, Madam, said he, my own eyes have deceived me once, and I will never trust them again. I ought to have known my wife better, no punishment can be equal to that which I have sustained, and yet I think it less than I deserve. But I am effectually cured of my Spanish humour, and if you can persuade my wife to return to me, and never to mention what is passed, she shall find me a good husband and a wise man.

Calista and Charlotte could not help laughing, but Mrs. Anguish's heart was so full, that she

was obliged to retire to bed, and would not suffer any servant to attend her. The next day it was resolved, that lady Constantia should write Olivia a letter to invite her down; as Mrs. Anguish did another of thanks, but in both, great care was taken to avoid saying any thing that might give Mr. Anguish any intimation of their knowing more than that he was returned to England, and was desirous that Olivia should renew her acquaintance with Mrs. Anguish. This lady was inclinable, at all events, to see her husband, but her aunt would be obeyed, and insisted, that as Mr. Anguish treated by his representative, she would be plenipotentiary for her niece. It may be certain, said she, that Mr. Anguish is recovered, but we can never be certain that he will not relapse. There is nothing I desire more, than that you should be reconciled; but it is necessary also that you should be secure, and if your husband is really become so wise a man, I think he can have no objection to it.

These letters were dispatched to London by a servant, who, at his return, brought answers highly satisfactory, with an account, that Olivia would be there as soon as possibly she could; and that Mr. Anguish was gone to Tunbridge to drink the waters. An apartment was prepared, and every thing put in order for Olivia's reception, with whose company, when she came down, lady Constantia was exceedingly pleased; and found her, in all respects, a lady of the greatest merit, strictly virtuous, without being precise, sincerely religious, without any tincture of superstition, and perfectly well bred, without the least affectation. She acquainted the ladies,

ladies, that she had brought them a Carte Blanche; that Mr. Anguish told her at parting, he would comply with any thing his wife could require, and that he was desirous to settle what he had hitherto allowed her, by way of separate maintenance, and secure to her his whole fortune, upon his decease. Lady Constantia, said she, had likewise full powers, but that Mr. Anguish's proposal had destroyed them; that her niece must treat for herself; but that if she was to act as an umpire, the first part of the offer was sufficient, in which Mrs. Anguish readily acquiesced, and Olivia was requested to give Mr. Anguish an account of the issue of their treaty, which was done by letter, intimating that his company would be very acceptable after his return from Tunbridge. This being settled, lady Constantia proposed, and Olivia thought it very expedient, that Mrs. Anguish should go with the two young ladies, to make a visit to lady Constantia's sister, that all things might be concluded with Mr. Anguish before they met, that their reconciliation might not be embarrassed with ceremony and writings.

Two days after, captain Courtly arrived with an account, that Sir Lawrence Testy, his nephew, and Miss Henrietta would be there before the end of the week, and that the young lady was charged to desire the favour, that Mrs. Anguish and Calista might return in the coach, and pass a week or ten days at her aunt's. This fell out very opportunely, and what occasioned some mirth. When captain Courtly heard that Miss Charlotte was likewise to go, he said, there was still a place empty in the coach, that with lady Constantia's leave, he would be glad to fill; which

INTRODUCTION. 15

which was the first indication that his temper was changed, and that he had lost his insensibility. Lady Constantia replied, that it would make a breach in their system, but that however she had no objection if the ladies consented. Some strange planet rules, said Mrs. Anguish, and I believe it will not be long before we have more treaties. Miss Charlotte blush'd, Calista laugh'd, and all things were very speedily and amicably adjusted. Lady Constantia said, that it was a fair exchange, and that it was but just she should send as many to her sister's as she took from her; so that you see, captain Courtly, added she, that I leave you out of the number, and consider you as a knight errant escorting these ladies. Mighty well, returned the captain, I am glad to see that grave lady can laugh; and provided I have a seat in the coach, can bear a little mortification till it arrives, but the less of it the better, and therefore if I may have permission, I will go and look out my friend Beaumont, for whom I have a message also. You don't propose to carry him too, said lady Constantia? No, no, madam, answered the captain, I only want an hour's conversation with him about a little affair of my own. I dare say, added Mrs. Anguish, you will find him in his study; but at supper we shall expect you both.

The captain's business with Mr. Beaumont was to explain to him, how a certain favourable circumstance had restored to him his liberty, by the delivering up of a promise of marriage, which had been drawn from him by a very artful woman at his first entrance into the world, and that had given him a great deal of trouble ever since, till upon the prospect of mending her fortune

tune

16 INTRODUCTION.

tune by an old fool: this mercenary syren was willing, for a very moderate gratuity, to release the young one, at a time when it was so much the more grateful to him; as he found himself extremely taken with the chearful temper and noble sentiments of Miss Charlotte. Beaumont heard this business at large with great patience, and without interposing a word. When the captain had done speaking; my friend, said he, the bell rings to supper, I shall therefore only say a few words in haste, and leave you to reflect upon them at leisure. You have discovered a great deal of joy at getting rid of one promise, and you seem very eager to make another with the utmost solemnity; this is not very consistent with that philosophic calmness which you have shewn for some time past. Consider the matter well and your motives better, and then follow the dictates of your judgment, remembering always, that this is a promise, which, once made, you will never be able to retract. The reputation you are in for prudence, has been the effects of experience, joined with constraint, and now you are happily at liberty, I should be sorry to see you relapse into indiscretion. Charlotte has good sense, good nature and a good disposition; the man who marries her and does not make a good husband, will have no excuse; let me never see you in that condition. I thank you, Beaumont, said captain Courtly, squeezing him by the hand; depend upon it, if you ever see me a husband, you will not wish her a better. They then hastened together to the great parlour, where the company was already sitting down to supper.

When

INTRODUCTION. 17

When they adjourned, according to the custom of the family ; lady Constantia acquainted Olivia with the agreeable manner in which they passed the beginning of the summer season, and the pleasure they had promised themselves from resuming this kind of amusement ; but I perceive, said she, at the close of her discourse, that schemes of diversion, like those of politicks, are subject to great uncertainty, how well soever they may be contrived, and that little projects are as liable to be disconcerted by time and accident as great ones. That kind of reasoning, said Olivia, may be true in general, but I do not see that any argument can be drawn to support it from this particular case ; for my part, as nothing could give me greater satisfaction, I am very unwilling to believe that any thing can prevent so pleasant entertainments, but the want of the same inclinations that originally inspired them. Alas, madam, said Constantia, our band of performers was but just sufficient, we are on the point of parting with a coach full, and can you imagine that the remnant will be able to do much ? Indeed, madam, said Miss Charlotte, that lady and my sister will have just reason to complain of such a decision. I should have regretted my absence from your former conversations, by which I was much instructed and improved ; but I have more reason to be sorry, that I cannot enjoy the sprightly and well digested relations, which must fall from the lips of persons so much superior in abilities, as Olivia, yourself and Henrietta. In point of number, the band, to use your ladyship's own phrase, will be the same, and in point of merit more compleat. Very frank and fine, upon my word, said

18 INTRODUCTION.

said Olivia, but I fancy this speech is not altogether extempore; your ladyship and Miss Charlotte are too hard for me; I was desirous indeed of being one of the audience, but to become an actress at this time of life, would not be over prudent, if it was in my power. Then of course, madam, said lady Constantia, you exempt me likewise, and our scheme, that was on the point of being retrieved, is again resolved into smoke.

Pardon me, Olivia, said Beaumont, if I just hint a political argument, that I flatter myself will have force sufficient to remove your objection: Mr. Anguish will meet with some disappointment upon his arrival; this scheme, if I mistake not, will, in a great measure, qualify it; can you refuse your assistance in such an emergency, or can you imagine that we shall suffer the only person amongst us to be dumb, who gives the highest pleasure when she speaks? Besides, madam, ours are moral amusements, which suit all ages and all conditions; those young ladies have shewn their principles; Sir Lawrence and myself our experience; we have reason to expect a happy mixture of both, from yourself and lady Constantia. The men, replied Olivia, have always recourse to flattery, when they would subvert our reason, and compliments often succeed, where constraint would certainly fail. It is a sensible pleasure to me that I can rely on the virtue of this family, for I really find myself so unable to resist the civilities I receive on every hand, that I plainly perceive you must do with me what you will. As for Sir Lawrence he is my old acquaintance, and never fails to pay me a visit or two when he is in town,

INTRODUCTION. 19

town, and I think I have seen his nephew, so that I yield with the less reluctance; and if Mr. Beaumont will settle the whole plan, and acquaint me in time with the part I am to take, I will perform it as well as I can, and shall rely upon your indulgence for the rest.

The next day the coach arrived in the evening, which was somewhat sooner than was expected, and the great parlour was full at supper, some accidental company having dropt in, thro' the course of the afternoon; but this did not hinder the assembly in the little parlour, though they could not meet till it was late. The scheme was quickly brought upon the carpet, but the new regulation did not employ much of their time; for Miss Henrietta declaring that she came prepared, there was no shadow of difficulty left. Sir Lawrence was overjoyed to see Olivia, and still more so, when he understood what share she was to take in their amusements. Miss Henrietta and Mr. Pensive paid their compliments to her likewise; she received them with great kindness, and told the former, that since she was to lose Charlotte and Mrs. Anguish, as well as Calista, she expected to have them all replaced by her. That task, replied she, may be impossible to a person, whose only merit consists, in knowing that she is inferior to all of them; the prudence of Mrs. Anguish, Charlotte's good nature, and Calista's sense, would indeed make an agreeable companion; but where will you find her? I should think it not improbable, added Olivia, in one who has penetration enough to make, and so much generosity as to express so judicious a reflection. I protest, Olivia, said lady Constantia, you enliven my family so much, that

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I am afraid we shall never be able to endure your absence. You have made Henrietta a wit at first sight. No, madam, interrupted Pensive, Henrietta is always so, though she could hardly meet with a more favourable opportunity of shewing it. My friend, said Courtly, the opportunity seems to be very happy for you too; methinks I never saw a man so altered, why, you look like the sun in a summer's day; may we promise ourselves that you will continue thus unclouded? Alas, Courtly, said Mr. Pensive, your eyes are mended, the clouds are indeed dispelled from you, and therefore I think you could not take a wiser resolution, than you have done, to follow the fair weather.

The dispositions for the journey, and settling the precise time of their return, engrossed the conversation till it grew late, and Mr. Beaumont was forced to interpose, as usual, that the oeconomy of things might not be disturbed by a propensity to lengthen the night at the expence of the day. As it was, Henrietta offered her assistance to Mrs. Anguish, and Charlotte and Calista went together to accomplish the great business of packing up. Constantia and Olivia retired to their apartments, and the men, on the proposal of Sir Lawrence, resolved to take a parting bottle in his chamber, where Pensive and Courtly rallied one another so long, that it was pretty late the next morning before they were up, and the coach, though ready at eight, was not in motion till eleven; so that they were forced to lay aside all thoughts of dining on the road, that they might arrive before it was dark at their journey's end.

Though

INTRODUCTION. 21

Though lady Constantia and Olivia were not a little concerned for the loss of their conversation, yet they were glad to see the ladies fairly gone before Mr. Anguish's arrival, being afraid that he would have taken post the moment that he had received the letter; but their fears were disappointed, and their patience received some trial, when a whole week slipped over, without either seeing or hearing from him. At length, however, he arrived, and as they at first expected, came down post. After the first civilities were over, Henrietta and Pensive introduced, for Beaumont he had seen at Olivia's, and to Sir Lawrence he was no stranger, he took lady Constantia and Olivia into another room. He began the conversation, with telling them, that lawyers were a sort of people whom nothing could move out of their own pace. This parchment, said he, pulling a deed out of his bosom, employed them for four days, though it might have been as well dispatched in so many hours; but as it was perused, ladies, by both your counsel, after it was drawn by mine, I think I may pass for a tolerable solicitor, in getting it out of their hands so soon. Here, madam, said he, turning to lady Constantia, is Mr. serjeant Slumber's opinion, that Mrs. Anguish's separate estate is well secured; and here are the opinions of those two eminent lawyers, Mr. Anyside and Mr. Nimbletongue, to the same purpose; and here, madam, is a deed of gift to the same lady, of my whole estate, after my decease; besides which, I have executed a bond, in a very high penalty, to her trustee, Mr. Worthy, in case of revocation. If this will purchase her, I am happy, if not, I know by

ex-

experience, that what I have given would not make me so.

I could wish, Sir, said lady Constantia, you had executed the treaty, according to the letter; for as I did not think it reasonable your wife should be left wholly in your power, so it seems to be less fit you should be wholly in hers. She is certainly a very virtuous and a very good woman, but still she is a woman. I consider this settlement, as a penalty imposed upon you for being a man; but what title she has to this deed of gift, I cannot tell. Really, madam, replied he, that is soon told, it is a penalty I have inflicted upon myself for being a fool. The first, in point of prudence, you had a right to expect; the other, after the imprudence of which I have been guilty, was the only amends I could make, and the only possible method of which I could think, to prevent her suffering by my being a fool again: I verily believe it will never happen; but as a man who is liable to drink, ought to take precautions against his foible, though he resolves to live ever so sober; so having seen her once injured through my weakness, I thought it best, while I am in my wits, to put that out of the question for the time to come. As to being in the power of Mrs. Anguish, that is no mighty matter, for I should be so, if that paper was in the fire; and indeed I know nobody that has any title to my fortune but her.

I apprehend, said Olivia, that these are points that must be settled between the parties themselves. Mrs. Anguish is at lady Constantia's sister's, and is not expected these ten days; we have laid a scheme to divert you in the mean time,

time, in which, however, there is a clause, that you shall be in a good humour and divert us. With all my heart, said Mr. Anguish, there is nothing I can refuse, to the duty which I owe lady Constantia, or to my friendship for you. What can pay the care she has taken of my wife for two years and more, or what can compensate the fatigue and trouble I have given you, in an affair, of which nothing but your goodness could have led you to take notice?

This conversation being over, the ladies conducted Mr. Anguish to the great parlour, from whence Olivia soon withdrew to write a letter, which she dispatched by a messenger to Mrs. Anguish, fixing her return to the Tuesday se'nnight following. This point settled, she was going to the company, when she met lady Constantia, who told her, that she was very well pleased to find Mr. Anguish in so good temper; but was amazed a man of such strong sense should suffer his peace to be so long disturbed by such a trifle; and I, said Olivia, I am not surprised at it at all. He really loves his wife to a degree of distraction, and I should not be altogether free from apprehensions, if I did not clearly perceive, that his humour has taken quite another turn, which I believe will effectually secure his happiness; he was formerly so much a Spaniard as to rely upon himself; he has now resumed the manners of his own country; and as every good Englishman should, depends upon his wife. He and you say so, replied lady Constantia, but really I do not understand it. Why then, replied Olivia, though an old maid, I must explain it; the wisdom of a Spanish husband makes him think he can keep his wife honest, whereas

whereas an English husband makes his wife her own keeper. Very well, answered lady Constantia, and if I know any thing of the sex, there are more virtuous wives here than there: Beaumont has been explaining the plan of our evening amusements to Mr. Anguish, who likes it mightily. His only exception is to the verse; we have therefore dropped that particular, or rather left it to every body's choice. In that, replied Olivia, I think you are very right, as it will remove a temptation to borrowing or stealing; but pray when are we to enter on our task? On Monday next, said lady Constantia. This evening Mr. Anguish will have need of repose; to-morrow and Sunday we shall have a good deal of company, and besides, the actors you know must have a little time to get up their parts.

The discourse after supper was very short, and there happened only one incident that was remarkable. Sir Lawrence Testy having complimented Mr. Anguish on throwing off the Spanish gravity, enquired how it came to pass, that almost all Englishmen assumed the manners of that country, who resided long there. That, said Mr. Anguish, is no wonder at all. In the first place it is necessary, the old proverb says, that when we are at Rome, we must do as they do at Rome; and this is so verified in Spain, that if a man will not live amongst them in their way, he cannot live there at all. Next, it is very useful, by imitating their manners we grow into credit with them, and certainly there is no nation in Europe, for whom they have so great an inclination. Generally speaking, they hate the French, and have a kind of contempt

INTRODUCTION. 25

contempt for the Dutch, which arises chiefly from their copying Spanish manners with an ill grace. A Frenchman very rarely lays aside his gallantry, and a Dutchman is apt to fail in point of decorum, but an Englishman hispanioliz'd, differs so little from a native Spaniard, that the nation have a natural kindness for him; and if he is an honest man, it is impossible he should not succeed in his affairs. Lastly, Sir Lawrence, it is agreeable, the sobriety, honour and punctuality of the Spaniards are very striking qualities; we commonly love what we admire, and naturally conform ourselves to what we love. Habit you know is second nature, and when we have lived for some time by certain rules, it becomes very difficult to break through them. I shall readily grant you that stiffness, obstinacy, jealousy, and several other errors grow up with those virtues, and that we are apt to imitate their characters throughout, which is a fault. Yet however defensible our conduct may be in those parts, we ought, without doubt, to resume English manners when we return home; since the state and formality of a Spaniard is as ridiculous here, as our frankness and familiarity would be there. It is very true, this is not easily done, but when we know that it ought to be done, we ought to set about it, let it cost ever so much pains. Sir Lawrence thanked him for his explanation and approved his notions, so did Pensive and Beaumont; and the latter added, that as the Spaniards were a loyal and brave people, he was always more inclined to extenuate than to aggravate their failings.

At breakfast, the next morning, all the preliminaries were settled, and notwithstanding

26 INTRODUCTION.

Olivia strongly opposed it, the company resolved she should begin, and when she had concluded her tale, name the gentleman who was to entertain them next. A free liberty was given of inventing, altering, or translating, as every one liked best. The point of poetry was again canvassed, lady Constantia and Sir Lawrence pressed it, but Mr. Beaumont insisted, it should remain a matter of choice, intimating, that he believed they should be no losers upon that plan. Mr. Pensive took occasion from thence to mention some verses that he had seen in Beaumont's study; upon which Mr. Anguish expressed a desire to see them likewise; lady Constantia seconded him; Beaumont would willingly have excused himself from producing them, alledging, that this was a breach of the rule they had just made; lady Constantia said, she conceived there was a wide difference between leaving poetry to the choice of those, who were inclined to make it, and the reasonable claim they had to verses, that were already made. Beaumont finding that nobody would assist him, was constrained to submit, went to his study, fetched the paper, and putting it into Mr. Pensive's hand, told him; that since he had called for them, it was but just he should read them; the rather, because he was very happy in having a fine voice and a graceful delivery, equally removed from coldness and affectation. Mr. Pensive said, there was something malicious in the compliment, and that he had raised the expectations of the audience, with a view to expose him to their censure; but Sir Lawrence adding his commands, he was forced to yield in his turn.

*In ancient days, e'er Britons conquer'd were,
Before the softer arts debas'd their minds,
When wants were few, and such as nature taught,
With ease supply'd, and men had time to live;
To give their thoughts free scope, and exercise
The soul's high faculties, in noble flights,
Beyond this narrow world.—In deep recess,
Of forests dark, where sacred silence reigns,
The druids taught their moral mystick lore.*

*They taught, that virtue was the bliss of man.
Ah, whence in times like these had they such skill!
That wisdom dwelt not on the fluent tongue,
In copious speeches, or persuasive sounds,
Delightful often and delusive too.
But in short maxims, present to the mind,
Just rules of conduct, which at once make known
The path of right, and call the soul to prove
Her love to truth, by doing what is fit.*

*They taught, that private virtues peace secur'd,
To ev'ry family, and bless'd each head
With good peculiar; made their youth decline
The path of vice, preserv'd their maidens chaste,
Their matrons pure, and gave the hoary sire,
To see that spirit in his race revive,
That warm'd his vig'rous years.—
While they with dutious rev'rence to his will,
Fashion'd their steps with an obsequious love.*

*They taught, that social virtues were the bands
Of public concord; that the good of all
Took place of private good, and he was bless'd,
Who by the timely sacrifice of ease,
Of his small wealth, or ev'n of life could save,
Or snatch his country from the stroke of ill.
That acts like these, conferr'd a claim to pow'r,
And that superior virtues mark'd out kings;*

28 INTRODUCTION.

*But mark'd to what ? Not to the lawless sway
Of cruel tyrants, or the ignoble rule
Of princes, sunk in luxury and sloth ;
But mark'd to glorious toils, imperial cares,
The post supreme, of watching o'er the state.*

*They taught, that thro' the boundless space of
heav'n,*

*Innumerable globes, by pow'r divine
Roll'd in their proper orbs ; not unsupply'd
With fit inhabitants ; but full of those,
Free reas'ning beings ; who in meaner states
Had kept their innocence, improv'd their pow'rs,
And by exertion of their faculties,
Deserv'd, or rather GOOD EXISTING, gave
Access of knowledge, and superior life.*

*Hence too they taught, that fear of death was
vain,*

*A tim'rous folly, ta'en on trust from sense,
That trembles e'en at salutary pain ;
Or rais'd thro' consciousness of guilty deeds,
Destroying present joy, forbidding hope,
Yet giving evidence to future fears.
But those who liv'd like men, they taught should
die,*

*With minds unhurt, since death was unto life ;
What life to death, a certain way prescrib'd,
To some new state, and so but life exchang'd.*

*Mov'd by these oracles, that hardy race
Of painted Britons, liv'd content and free ;
Unblest'd with riches, but with virtue blest'd,
And scorning all beside ; ev'n life in chains,
Or led on suff'rance in a servile state.
Rather than this, they rush'd on noble death,
Joy in their looks, their bosoms swell'd with
hope,*

Leaving their enemies to sound their fame.

Such

*Such were our ancestors in this fair isle.
 Much fairer now, in more enlighten'd times,
 With more of worldly blessings, Britain shines.
 In like proportion are her sons improv'd?
 Do we excel our fathers, as the face
 Of this sweet country; healthy, rich and great;
 Exceeds the marshes, which the Romans found,
 And wicker towns, and boats of leather made?*

*Britain that gives remotest Indies law,
 The QUEEN of ocean, EMPRESS of the isles,
 Still can she boast her virtue undecay'd?*

*Oft let us ask this question of ourselves,
 Nor dare reflect on what of All is said
 By angry men, who yet may speak the truth.
 'Tis ours to mend; and with ungracious voice,
 We censure those above or those below,
 While in the middle we are unreform'd,
 And basely practise, what we loudly blame.*

*While with our lips we own belief of truths,
 Our actions ne'er confess, and meanly speak
 Another language in our daily deeds,
 Then we dare utter with our dastard tongues;
 While pomp and pleasure occupy our hearts;
 While poverty, not vice, is what we fear;
 While wealth at any rate attracts our wish;
 While wants increase, as we that wealth ac-
 quire;*

Nor blush to think at what expence 'twas gain'd.

*Be it our care, from uselefs, idle play,
 To snatch the flying hours, while yet they fly,
 And in these happy times of leisure, trace
 The num'rous vanities of modern life:
 Explore the sources of that general taint,
 From what has reach'd ourselves; correcting that,
 Reviewing vice by vice, and fault by fault;
 'Till all the hideous train shall be cashier'd,*

30 INTRODUCTION:

And pleasure found, so long pursu'd in vain.

*Nor then let satire rage, so late reclaim'd ;
How dare we rail at those we lately left,
To whom in railing, we return again ?
No, let example be the powerful charm,
Let us by others, be distinguish'd first,
As having left unscourg'd corruption's paths,
And taught again our woods their ancient sounds ;
Pronounc'd by those, who act the things they speak,
And scorn the players mask, whate'er the part.*

Lady Constantia's little assembly met on Monday evening, about half an hour after nine ; and after congratulating each other on the pleasure they expected from these moral amusements ; Beaumont recapitulated in few words, the regulations they had made, and expatiated a little on the reason that induced them to expect Olivia would form no farther objections to their unanimous desires of her opening these entertainments, which had been purposely signified on Saturday, that she might not seem to be surprised into granting them a favour, which they rather hoped, would proceed from her own good nature and condescension. Olivia said smiling, that tho' a prisoner was as much a prisoner, when bound with ribbons as when tied with cords, yet she found, that things the most difficult, might be so obligingly pressed, as to leave it impossible to avoid what was required ; and therefore it was better to comply with a good grace, than to embarrass herself and disturb them any longer. All who were present thanked her, took their usual seats ; and lady Constantia having given the necessary orders, Olivia, after they had sat a minute or two silent, began thus.

T H E



THE
C H A R M;
OR, THE

Vindictive MOTHER-IN-LAW.

An affecting Story in humble Life.



It is laid down as a rule, said Olivia, that a just description of places, and a due distinction of times are the life and light of history; but this must be understood, of what regards illustrious persons, and transactions of real importance, to the conduct of civil life. In reference to such relations as mine, which have a tendency to improve, by explaining the passions that agitate human nature, those niceties are of little consequence, and it is sometimes better to conceal them; for if actions and events be properly stated, it matters not much what were the real names of the parties, or whether the scene be laid in England, Arcadia, or Utopia. Availing myself therefore of the justice of these remarks, I will proceed directly to my narrative, without any farther introduction.

In one of those countries, I cannot precisely say which, there lived a kind of gentleman farmer, who, with a small estate of his own, held another more considerable, which he rented from a person of distinction in the neighbourhood. The name of this honest countryman was Stephano, of moderate parts, a mild disposition, one who loved peace beyond all things, and who, to the age of forty-five, had led a comfortable, hospitable life ; happy in his own family, and respected by all his neighbours ; at that season he lost his wife, who was a woman of very amiable qualities ; chearful, industrious, benevolent, very useful to her husband in the management of his concerns ; and yet so compliant and submissive, that what was really the effects of her good sense and constant application, was generally imputed to his direction by herself, and so believed by others, till her decease made it appear, that her humility concealed many virtues, and thereby rendered them the more valuable. By this good woman, Stephano had an only son, about the age of fifteen, who was called Dorilus, and by the care of his mother to that time, very properly educated ; for the sake of which, and as a just precaution against her own indulgence, he was boarded at a town about twenty miles from their village. The lad resembled his father in his countenance, and in his understanding ; had much of his mother's meekness, but falling into the care of a master, who either was not of an austere disposition, or at least could distinguish, that some tempers might be ruined by severity, lived as happily as he could wish, and was as much improved as young people generally are at his age.

Stephano

Stephano loved him very well, and regretted his mother very much ; but in less than a year's time, his circumstances, as he imagined, made it appear, that a mistress was necessary in his house, as well as a master, and that in short, affairs could not go on right without a wife.

His acquaintance no sooner perceived his inclinations, than they began to talk of a match for him. The person they proposed, was one Rodope a maiden, by her own account about thirty years of age, but nearer forty by the parish register. She valued herself, on being better born than most of her neighbours, and on this account, had withstood some very suitable offers, considering that her fortune was but small. She was by no means averse to the marriage, being very desirous to be mistress of a family, and Stephano being almost passive in the matter, by the interposition of some busy people, who called themselves their friends, it was quickly brought about. This change in the good man's condition occasioned great revolutions in his family. Rodope, to shew herself a notable woman, turned away most of his servants, altered the manner of living, and from rough, plain house-keeping, set up for gentility ; furnished their own table with good things, and took care that the servants should participate of them as little as possible.

As a farther mark of her discretion, Dorilus was sent for home, and instead of handling his book, was taught to handle the plough. The mildness of his temper hindered him from resenting this usage ; and as his father took a share in the fatigue, and was very kind to him when they were alone, he bore it with all the

patience imaginable ; tho' Rodope in her abundant prudence, thought it proper, that as he worked, he should eat too with the servants, while her son, Papilio, born about a year after she was married, was caressed and attended, as if he had been the heir of a great estate. The mother's indulgence on the one hand, being as preposterous, as her severity on the other.

In this manner, between seven and eight years slipt over, during which space, Stephano found most of his wife's fortune spent, his affairs running on from bad to worse, his neighbours less respectful than they were ; his landlord more exact in his demands, and his family in continual confusion. When he attempted to expostulate matters with his wife, she answered him, as if they had been at cross purposes. If he complained his expences were too great, she told him, she did not come to him a beggar ; if he lamented his losses, she talked of her high birth ; and if he expressed his amazement, that the house was never at quiet, she insinuated that his son was in the fault. Some people were more knaves than fools ; mean dispositions loved mean company, and though servants had quick ears, yet if these were not in alliance with other people's tongues, they could learn little. By these arts the old man's temper was soured, and Dorilus got many a sound blow, and seldom a sweet word from his father ; which affected him greatly, and in some measure weakened his natural parts, as well as effaced those rudiments of learning in which his kind master had assiduously instructed him.

As oppression naturally attracts pity, so there was not a house in the village, where Dorilus

was not well received and kindly treated. His mother-in-law was generally condemned, and frequently reprov'd, which made her the more vindictive; and as she saw her husband's memory began to be impaired, she practis'd upon him with such subtilty and address, that how strange soever it may appear, she infused a notion into his mind, that Dorilus was the sole source of their misfortunes, and that all things might be speedily retriev'd, if he was once fairly out of the house. Stephano, was equally at a loss how to bring it about, or how to hide his unnatural inclination. The lad on the other hand, though stupified with his misfortunes and ill usage, could not but perceive it; yet neither knowing where to go, or how to behave, he was oblig'd to make a virtue of necessity, and dissemble things daily, that went to his very heart; and in spite of the coolness of his disposition, hurried him almost to distraction; so that if his sorrow could have given him any spirits, he had certainly quitted a place, where he was every moment insulted, and where the servants, to make court to their mistress, treated him as if he had been beneath them, and not the son of their master; a life so irksome would infallibly have wore out his constitution, tho' naturally robust, if in the midst of his troubles he had not met with some consolation.

Amongst the inhabitants of this small place, there was an old woman, who lived in a little cottage, distinguished by the tightness of its outside, and the neatness of every thing within. Her name was Melissa; and as she came from a place more than a hundred miles off, lived very retired, and did nothing for her maintenance;

the neighbours told abundance of strange tales of her ; but her true history was this. She had spent the best part of her life in a noble family, where she waited on, and was the companion of the lady. The eldest son, as too frequently happens, had employed the eclat of his birth, the beauty of his person, and the superiority of his parts, in seducing an innocent country girl, whose name was Florimel ; and the intrigue being discovered, the young rake was sent to travel, and the unfortunate beauty abandoned to despair. Melissa saw this with horror, and endeavoured to insinuate something in favour of this unhappy creature to her lord ; for which, she received a severe reprimand. This, instead of stifling, augmented her compassion, which induced her to afford that relief she could not procure, and Florimel and her unfortunate infant, whose name was Myrtilla, subsisted at this poor woman's expence, for about three years, and then the mother broke her heart with grief, recommending her hapless child, in her last moments, to the protection of providence, and the kindness of this good creature ; whose tenderness induced her to promise much, and whose piety and virtue, made her religiously keep her word, in spite of all the aspersions and inconveniencies with which it was attended.

She took the same care of the little orphan, as if it had been her own ; and her lady dying, when the child had attained the age of seven years, and leaving her a little money, she retired with it to this village, where she had lived for twelve years, making in that space three or four visits to the father of the child, who was long before return'd home ; and sensible of this kindness,

he never suffered her to depart without a present. She had educated Myrtilla in a manner suitable to that state of life she was like to lead, and with a small tincture of learning, had taught her to be sincerely religious, and a very good housewife. They lived together in the utmost harmony, rose and went to bed early, were never idle, and had every thing about them in perfect order, though they received but few visits, and hardly ever went abroad but to their devotions. It is almost incredible, that notwithstanding all this privacy and retirement, they were the talk of the whole village; and as the vulgar always frame strange ideas of things, they do not at all understand; so there was nothing more common, than to hear them stile these two poor women, the young saint and the old witch; for as Melissa changed now and then a piece of gold, it was a point settled amongst them, that she must have it from the fairies, if not from beings of a worse nature; but Myrtilla, who was very handsome and very good natur'd, escaped all censure.

As Melissa was well apprized of the circumstances and misfortunes of Dorilus, so the humanity of her temper made her more than commonly civil to him, when he had leisure to make her a visit; and in return, he pruned the trees in her orchard, and did every thing in the garden that might have been troublesome to her, or fatiguing to Myrtilla. When his mother-in-law had teized his father into a passion, he retired thither, till the storm was over; and Melissa, upon such occasions, gave him a great deal of good advice, while Myrtilla expressed her concern by
her

her tears. The goodness of the one, and the kindness of the other, wrought in time such an effect on Dorilus's mind, tho' the long series of trouble he had gone through, had rendered him rather phlegmatick than amorous, that at last he ventured to tell Myrtila, if ever his circumstances changed, he should be glad to share his fortunes with one, who had shewn so much pity for his pain. The old woman, however, discouraged all discourses of this sort, exhorted Dorilus to obedience, and told Myrtila, that it was not yet time for her to think of a husband. But time or not time, as the young people saw one another often, so they imperceptibly came to consider each other's interest, as if they had been already united. Myrtila lamented that Dorilus should be so used, and Dorilus could not bear to see Myrtila employed in any laborious work, which whenever it was fit for him to do, he never failed to take off her hands. Thus without talking much of love, they expressed in their actions, a passion that was like to prove the more lasting, as it was visibly disinterested and sincere.

We must now return to Rodope, who amongst other good qualities possessed that of gossiping in a high degree, which made it impossible for her to be long ignorant, that Dorilus spent all his holidays, and every hour of leisure at the cottage of the old woman, which from a refined stroke of policy she very much encouraged, and of a sudden altered her conduct, brought Dorilus back to his father's table, and treated him in all respects so well for two or three months, that he began to think himself in another world. But when she had triumphed over his honest and unsuspicious nature, and had gained that end for which

which her arts were employed, and of which we shall have hereafter an occasion to speak, she returned to her old disposition, invented new calumnies, possessed his father with fresh prejudices, and in the end carried things so far as to obtain his consent, that when he went next to pay his landlord, she should take an occasion in his absence to thrust Dorilus out of doors.

The poor young man not dreaming of any such disaster, went after his work was done, the same evening that his father set out, to do some little matter in Melissa's garden, and being about midsummer staid there till ten o'clock. When he had eat his supper, and was about to return home, Rodope sent him word that where he had staid so late he might remain for good and all, for that within his father's doors he should never come again. By the advice of Melissa however he ventured back notwithstanding this message, but his mother in law flatly refused him admittance, and he was forced to lie, first at one neighbour's house, and then at another, till his father returned back. Some of the oldest people in the village undertook to reconcile them, but it was impossible; Stephano said, he was able to get his own living, and should no longer remain a burthen upon him. It was in vain that they represented to him, that instead of being a burthen he was his principal support, that this separation would be very prejudicial to Stephano's affairs, and that besides such usage to his eldest son would hurt his reputation extremely. He was deaf to all their arguments, but as he was a man void of artifice, he could not help adding, that his son was an eye sore to his wife,
and

and that he was resolved to be quiet if possible the little time he had to live.

When the news of all this reached Melissa, she quickly foresaw, that if some care was not immediately taken of the young man, this consternation would so seize upon his spirits as might possibly break his heart. She sent for him therefore, and told him, that as she was the involuntary cause of his misfortune, and since his father had totally abandoned him, she was willing to do for him all that was in her power. She added, that there was a little farm vacant at about a mile distant that belonged to his father's landlord, and if he would take it, and manage it the best he could, she would help him to as much money as might be requisite. Dorilus consented with joy, and reckoned with such assurance, that this was to be attended with the marriage of Myrtilia, that he went about it with the utmost alacrity. All things were soon adjusted with the landlord, who treated him very kindly, and when he had stocked, and was on the point of entering upon this new scene of life, he asked Melissa when he should marry Myrtilia, and was exceedingly surprized to hear that she must first see whether he was like to thrive. As there was no going back, Dorilus was forced to keep house as a bachelor, but the desire he had of altering his condition made a wonderful change in his temper. Instead of that dulness and melancholy which hung about him, he became as active as he was industrious, and in the space of about a twelve month had all things in so good order, that Melissa, upon her return from one of her journeys, did not think it proper to delay the settlement of Myrtilia any longer, so
that

that the marriage was concluded and solemnized, and the young couple went home to their own house. Dorilus was very desirous that the old woman should dwell with them, but to that she would by no means consent. She took a poor girl, the daughter of one of her neighbours, to live with her, and contented herself with making frequent visits to Dorilus and his spouse so long as her health would permit.

In a short time after their marriage, Dorilus left almost every thing to his wife's management, except his agriculture, in which he was both industrious and expert. She was equally prudent and indefatigable, and as Melissa helped them in the beginning, so in a little time their affairs were in a prosperous condition; and as things ever so little extraordinary are generally magnified, the whole country round rung of the good fortune of this young couple. Stephano was secretly pleased at the news, which gave Rodope more perplexity than the bad situation of their own affairs. She pretended at first to despise and laugh at these reports, and as if contrived only to restore him to his father's favour, she next invented a hundred malicious tales that met with no kind of credit; and at length she meditated a reconciliation, that she might have an opportunity of prying into their affairs, in hopes of kindling some animosity or strife between the young couple. With this intention she persuaded Stephano to make them a visit, and carried that point very easily, there being nothing the old man so much desired; he went, and was received with all the kindness and duty imaginable, yet could not prevail upon Dorilus or his wife to return the visit, they were with good reason
afraid

afraid of Rodope, and would by no means consent to an interview. At length Dorilus being one day near his father's house, the old man with much ado prevailed upon him to come in, and his mother in law counterfeited such a transport of joy at the sight of him, as in some measure removed the remembrance of her past behaviour, and made way for successive visits.

This was by no means acceptable to Myrtilia, tho' she avoided as much as possible shewing her uneasiness to her husband, and abated nothing of that deference and respect which was due to his father. Rodope next attempted to scrape an acquaintance with Melissa, but in that she failed, for the old woman absolutely refused to see her. At length, she took advantage of her husband's being prone to drown his cares in drink, and whenever Dorilus came to their house, supplied them so plentifully, that the old man soon got his load, and the young one seldom went away sober. She laid hold of these opportunities, under pretence of commending Myrtilia's good conduct, to expatiate on the great advantage she must have received from the sage instructions of Melissa, glancing now and then at the foolish tales that had been current about her ; pretending to enquire into the relation between them, observing that Melissa was too old to be his wife's mother, and that possibly he might have expectations from her kindred. Thrusting such thoughts into his head, when it was before disordered with the fumes of liquor, she sent him home commonly in an ill temper, which Myrtilia bore with great patience, and never reproached him after their differences were over.

Another

Another artifice of Rodope's was to practise upon Stephano, and between jest and earnest, to ask him many impertinent and disagreeable questions, to which he seldom gave her any answer. She had been plaguing him in this manner one morning, when Dorilus came in, whom she very kindly invited to dinner, asked very affectionately after his wife, crying up her virtues to the skies, telling him how happy he was in a woman, whose industry and abilities were the theme of the whole country. After dinner, she was for setting them to the bottle as usual, and taking her leave, but Stephano answered, he was in no humour for drinking, and with an air of authority, which he had never put on since their marriage, bid her sit down and hear what he had to say. She obeyed him through surprize, and after looking stedfastly for some moments upon her, and then upon his son, the old man wiping the tears from his eyes, and recollecting himself a little, proceeded thus.

“ This woman, Dorilus, is the very reverse
 “ of her that was thy mother. She was obedient, industrious, and full of goodness. All
 “ the fault I know of her was, that from her
 “ virtues, I came to have a better opinion of
 “ the sex than I ought, and to believe, that by
 “ getting another wife, I should have such another woman. Rodope is negligent, malicious, and implacable, she has made me miserable from the hour I married her; she forced
 “ me to treat thee with a barbarity that my
 “ soul abhorred, and now envious of thy happiness, she would willingly give thee ill impressions of a wife, who perfectly resembles
 “ her that bore thee. Beware of her arts, and
 “ cherish

“ cherish that peace, which for many years I
“ have fought in vain. My life draws near an
“ end, and therefore I was willing in her pre-
“ sence to testify my thoughts freely, that once
“ in my life I might act as became a father. I
“ shall be glad henceforward to see you as often
“ as I can, but we will drink together no more,
“ the man that has a long journey in view,
“ ought to keep himself sober. My blessing at-
“ tend you and her likewise, if this admonition
“ has any effect, which I very much fear. But
“ it is fit that you should know that your father
“ was no fool, and that she should be at length
“ told, that too great a love of ease, will tempt
“ a man into courses that will keep him conti-
“ nually uneasy.”

Dorilus bursting into tears, embraced the old man with the most tender affection ; Rodope sat silent and full of confusion. At length she wept too, and with all the dissembled signs of penitence, asked both their pardons, but absolutely denied, that she had ever any intention to prejudice Myrtilia in her husband's opinion. When Dorilus returned home, he was very thoughtful and melancholy, which amazed his wife, who did all she could to divert him, till at length of his own accord, he told her what had passed, at which she could not help being exceedingly astonished, flattering herself at the same time, that Rodope had seen her error, and that they had for the future nothing to fear from her vices : but the time of her conversion was not yet come ; on the contrary, her tears flowed purely from spite and disappointment, and the falsehoods furnished by her tongue, were only calculated to fascinate the eyes of those, whose happiness she was

was projecting, to disturb by a new scene of delusions, contrived with the utmost cunning, and executed with the utmost virulence.

Stephano remained between five and six months under a gradual decay, which was supposed to proceed chiefly from trouble of mind. During that space, till within a week of his end, he maintained that superiority which he had assumed, and managed his affairs with such steadiness, that it was manifest, if he had taken up this resolution sooner, they might have been absolutely retrieved; as it was, he died pretty even with the world, and as Dorilus had been inveigled, during the time that his mother in law treated him so kindly, a little before she turned him out of doors, to sign a writing, by which she was to remain in possession of the whole estate, during her widowhood, in case she out lived her husband, she and her son, the copy of herself in miniature, were better provided for than they deserved. In the space of these six months, her conduct was so regular and unexceptionable, at least in appearance, that both Stephano and Dorilus were absolutely deceived, which had this good effect, that the old man died in peace and charity with her, and in the most affecting manner, recommended her and her son to the care of Dorilus, who with much truth and sincerity, promised to do for them all that they could expect from a son or from a brother; and as soon as the funeral of his father was over, he regulated things in the best manner he was able, and with the consent of his wife, advanced what money was necessary to make their circumstances easy.

About six weeks after she became a widow, Rodope expressed so great a desire to see and
make

make her acknowledgments to Myrtila, that Dorilus, who had not the least suspicion of her insincerity, finding all intreaties to no purpose, at length laid his absolute commands upon his wife, to go and make her a visit. She did so with great reluctance, and was received by Rodope with such deep dissimulation, and with such apparent marks of deference and submission, that the rectitude of her own heart defeated the dictates of her prudence, and left her without the least scruple, as to the entire change of the old woman's disposition, of which from the report of her husband, she had entertained but too favourable an opinion before.

As soon as Rodope perceived, that her arts were attended with all the effects that she could possibly desire, she began to make a trial of Myrtila's temper, by flattering her upon her beauty, lamenting that she was buried in an obscure part of the country, where it was impossible for her to receive that homage, which persons of the highest dignity would be proud of paying to her charms. There was indeed some foundation for these compliments, since exclusive of the regularity of her features, a most admirable complexion, a delicate shape, just height, and easy behaviour, there was something peculiarly striking and majestic in the manner of Myrtila, which made her look as if she had sought in a country retirement, to conceal a person that might have done honour to a court. But with all this she had no ambition, or rather the sentiments of her mind were superior to all her exterior advantages. She answered with an unaffected air of modesty, that she was born and educated in the country, that her desires were perfectly humble,

ble, that heaven had been propitious to her in all things, that her husband, her children, and her family took up all her thoughts; and that as she studied to make them happy, so the perceiving that this had hitherto succeeded to her utmost wish, her prayers were entirely directed to obtain a continuance of these blessings, and the preservation of a fit disposition in herself, to promote and to enjoy them, without feeling the sting of envy in her own breast, or exciting it in others.

When Rodope plainly saw that this battery failed, she changed it into excessive admiration of her prudence and virtue, of which she laboured to give Myrtilla such high ideas, as might induce her to treat her husband with contempt, and by assuming airs, utterly inconsistent with her station, render her insensibly ridiculous from being universally respected. As there is nothing perfect in human nature, so this was really the weak side of the amiable Myrtilla. She began to have a great opinion of Rodope's sense, and a better of her own conduct, that had triumphed over all the arts of this deceitful woman, and in spite of the duplicity of her nature, had converted her aversion into admiration.

But as she seldom visited Rodope, without paying her duty to Melissa before she returned home; that truly wise woman, speedily perceived the dawn of pride in the looks, the action, and the language of the wife of Dorilus. "Do I dream, said she, one day, when Myrtilla was taking her leave of her, or is this a lady of distinction, that I have so long considered as the spouse of a peasant. Alas, Melissa! to what purpose have all my cares, all my instructions,

“structions, and all my lectures been employed?
“Alas, Myrtilla! having escaped the dangers
“of infancy, the follies of youth, the disasters
“of the early part of life, was destruction reserved for that period, when your virtues
“should have shone in meridian splendour?
“Whence arises that stately look, that erect
“posture, and that studied choice of words, so
“incompatible with the condition in which providence has placed you, and in which you
“have been hitherto a thousand times happier,
“than those you awkwardly affect to imitate?
“Be gone, Myrtilla, be gone, and never see
“me again, till humility has resumed her seat
“in your breast, and demolished that idol you
“have placed there of your own perfections.”

It is impossible to express the confusion that Myrtilla was in; she withdrew without speaking a word, returned home, vexed, melancholy and ashamed. Dorilus quickly perceived, that her mind was more discomposed than he had ever seen it, and pressed to know the cause, concluding within himself, that Rodope had relapsed, and that his wife had discovered some new practices to give them disquiet. Myrtilla kept her secret, she said, that Melissa's indisposition and infirmities gave her great uneasiness, and that considering the many obligations she was under, she hoped he would excuse her, if the thoughts of losing so dear a friend, had made too strong an impression on her imagination. If that be the case, said Dorilus, I cannot blame you, but I owe her still greater, being equally indebted for the favours she has conferred on you, and reaping the benefit of them, by her bestowing you upon me, after saving me from ruin, when I

was

was in no condition to help myself. Pray return to morrow, and if you find Melissa worse, remain with her; I should never forgive either you or myself, for the slightest circumstance of ingratitude toward her.

The next day Myrtilla thought it prudent to make Melissa another visit, in which her behaviour fully shewed what a reformation had been made by a single rebuke. The good old woman took a great deal of pains, to make her sensible that pride was the blackest of all crimes, because it turns even our best qualities into vices, tarnishes our brightest endowments, and the better the being is which it invades, makes it become so much the worse. In the course of their conversation, Melissa plainly discovered that Rodope was the emissary of darkness that had corrupted her disciple, she therefore conjured her not to continue her visits, but to restrain all communication with her, to the strict rules of decent civility. Myrtilla intimated, that having suffered so much by her ill will, she was afraid of disobliging her again. I doubt child, answered Melissa, that your fear is but too well founded, but take my advice, notwithstanding she may do you much hurt as an enemy, she must do you much more, if you consider her as a friend. In either case you will not be safe, but in one you will be innocent, and in the other an accessory to your own ruin. Be ruled therefore by me who have seen much; alas, too much of this world, be true to yourself and fear not her falshood. Sooner or later it will fall entirely upon her own head.

Myrtilla pursued punctually the counsels of her ancient protectress, and it was not long be-

fore Rodope penetrated her conduct so far, as to discover that she was still suspected. This raised her resentment to the highest pitch, and she resolved to sacrifice all things, rather than not be revenged upon a woman, who, tho' so much younger, was wiser, better and happier than herself. After racking her thoughts almost to distraction, she fixed upon a scheme exquisite in its kind, but execrable in its nature. She wrote several passionate love letters in a feigned hand, and made her son Papilio throw them over a low hedge, in the dusk of evening, at several times into Dorilus's garden. By a strange accident, not one of these ever came to his hand, but were from time to time taken up by Myrtilla who read and burnt them, except the first, not without uneasiness ; and yet, which is no less strange without the least suspicion, that this was a new practice of her mother-in-law. Rodope all this while was in the greatest torment ; she watched the looks, the words, the gestures of Dorilus, whenever he came to see her, and was almost mad to find that an expedient so well contrived had no manner of effect. She introduced discourses of Myrtilla's beauty, on purpose to sift him, but in vain. " I thought her person handsome, said he, before I married her, and I have found her very prudent ever since. I hear many of my neighbours complain of their wives, and if I knew mine had any fault, I should complain of her too, but as I do not, I am forced to hold my tongue." This blunt speech was a kind of dagger, that pierced to the very soul of Rodope. The head and heart of this fool, said she to herself, are equally impenetrable, and with all my skill, I shall

shall never get the better of this creature, who had the skill to open my husband's eyes, and to seal up those of her own. She determined however to make another effort, and having wrote a fresh letter, called for Papilio, and bid him sling it over the hedge as he used to do. The boy fell a crying, and said he was afraid to go. Rodope asked him what made him afraid; the boy replied, that every time he went he met Philemon, their next door neighbour, in the lane behind the garden, and that he had threatened to whip him if ever he caught him there again. I will then send some body else, child, said his mother, dissembling the satisfaction that this piece of intelligence gave her, for she had not the least doubt that there was a correspondence between Philemon and Myrtilla, and that by this means, her project was discovered and spoiled.

The happy lover, the victorious general, never felt a greater flow of spirits in consequence of their success, than Rodope in the contemplation of hers, which she thought infallible. She wrote a letter to Dorilus, subscribed a friend, acquainting him, that towards seven at night, Philemon met Myrtilla in the shady lane behind his garden, and that nothing could have moved the author of this discovery to make it, but the desire of rescuing so honest, and so harmless a man from the treachery of so base a woman. This letter she got privately conveyed into a parcel, that was left for her son-in-law at a house in the town where he usually called; and her design was so far answered, that it came very safe to his hands. He read it with some emotion, and reflected upon it with still more uneasiness. Philemon was one of his best friends;

it was from his hands that he had received Myrtilla in marriage, he was the sponsor to his first child, and came very frequently to his house. Yet upon running over in his mind a variety of incidents that had happened since their marriage, he could find nothing that gave the least colour of truth to this accusation, which notwithstanding, he could not either drive out of his head, or resolve to speak of it to his wife.

On the contrary, he determined to watch her for two or three nights, which he did to no manner of purpose, and this had like to have cured him; but recollecting that if the thing was true, she might probably remain within doors while he was in the house, he bethought himself of another course; he sent his wife the next afternoon to a neighbour's, where he promised to come himself as soon as it was dark, and then went into the garden, and walked there from sun set till he could not see his hand, without perceiving any thing but his own shadow. Yet this did not satisfy him. It was possible, that by some secret signal, Philemon might be informed, that his wife was abroad. It is the property of jealousy to be very ingenious in contriving fictions, to disturb the heart in which it inhabits. What served to nourish the disease in Dorilus, was, that while he was musing there by himself, his wife came to fetch him, which put him not a little out of temper, and might probably have raised suspicions in a bosom less calm than that of Myrtilla, who said, that her neighbours were impatient till he came, and that she had not disturbed him, if they had not compelled her to it. This pacified him, and finding it upon enquiry to be true, he began to think

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think

think himself once more in the wrong. The next morning however, he contrived an expedient that he thought could not fail; there was a large elm at the entrance of the lane, into which he resolved to climb, and to watch there for the coming of Philemon the very next night.

This noble design of perching upon a tree, delighted him extremely before it came to be put in practice; but when he had got up and roosted there for an hour or two, his speculations gave him no great satisfaction. His thoughts ran first one way and then another, at length when it grew gloomy and cold, he begun to curse the letter and the contriver, and at last was on the point of getting down and going home to bed, when hearing a man's foot at a small distance, he peeped through the leaves, and saw plainly that it was Philemon. His sentiments whirled round in an instant, he was now as fully convinced as he was incredulous before, and without staying a moment to consider what he should say, or what he should do, he slid down and followed him as fast as he was able. When he had got a little beyond the corner of his own garden, Philemon hearing a man's foot behind him stopped. Dorilus when he came up was out of breath, but as soon as he could recover himself; my wife, said he, is very much obliged to you for these evening visits; and it seems —— Your wife, said Philemon, why Dorilus are you run mad, what is the meaning of this behaviour? The meaning of your behaviour, said Dorilus, I have here in black and white, shewing him the letter; which when Philemon had read, he paused a little, and then putting it in his pocket; friend Dorilus, said he,

you and I must not part, till this matter is cleared up, come along with me briskly, but say not another word. They walked together silently, for a mile and a half, and then found themselves under the wall of the gentleman's garden, who was Dorilus's landlord. There Philemon stopped, and having whistled softly, the window of a summer house was opened. The lover easily mounted the wall, bidding Dorilus stay a moment, and he would call him up, which he did.

When he had likewise got in at the window, he saw his landlord's only daughter, a young woman of about nineteen; this, said Philemon, presenting Dorilus, is my friend, to whose house I propose to carry you; I met him accidentally and brought him with me, that we might concert all things together. Indeed, said she, it is time, for my father proposed a match to me this morning, and without ceremony, told me, he had cast his eyes upon a young man, who would make me a very good husband; that he began to grow in years himself, and was therefore resolved to see me settled without delay. Pray, said Philemon, who is this fortunate youth? that is more than I can tell, answered the young woman, all that I know is that he lives in your village, and my father says, he is a very prudent young man, and one whose person any woman may like. He is to dine here this day sen'night, but I am determined not to see him, and therefore take your measures with your friend, and I will meet you here the night before and go to his house. I dare not stay a moment now, for you are come later than your time, and my father will call me to read to him, as soon as he gets up into his chamber.

Philemon

Philemon and Dorilus descended with the utmost expedition, but did not make quite so much haste back as they did thither; when they had got about half a mile, what think you of your letter, my friend, said Philemon? I think, answered Dorilus, that I am a fool; but however, I have the satisfaction of knowing that you are another. What more riddles still, added Philemon? Riddle me no riddles, cried Dorilus, you would not suffer me to open my mouth, going, and now let us trot home as fast as we can in silence; when we are by a good fire, and Myrtilla has got us some supper, she shall be judge between us. You shall give her the history of my folly, and then I'll let her into yours, after which she shall decide which is the greatest sot. You make nothing then, said Philemon, of betraying my secret to your wife. Not I, said Dorilus, and may I perish when I keep a secret from her next. Had I disclosed this in time, I had not hung shivering in yon tall elm, till I had almost lost the use of my limbs, purely to have the pleasure of seeing a fellow bent upon a more foolish errand than my own; come, mend your pace neighbour, for I am still almost frozen.

When they came home they found a good fire, the cloth laid, and Myrtilla waiting for her husband to go to supper. They had both of them by this time good stomachs, and thought it prudent therefore to dispatch that business first; Myrtilla supplied them with every thing in great abundance, with such an air of frankness and good humour, as but the night before would have fully convinced Dorilus, that his intelligence came from a real friend. He smiled more

than once at the thought, which Philemon interpreted in another sense. You need not laugh neighbour, said he, judgment is not given yet; and when it is it will not be on your side. What judgment, cried Myrtilla? My dear, answered Dorilus, that we are to learn from you. Take your place there at the upper end of the board, and when you have heard what each of us has to say, tell us honestly, which you take to be the greatest fool. Come Philemon, do you begin, deliver your charge freely, and produce all the evidence you can.

The wife of Dorilus could not help looking a little grave at some parts of Philemon's story, which he closed with telling her the resolution her husband had made, never to keep a secret from her again. I wish, said she, I had taken the same resolution some time ago, which if I had, all this trouble would have been prevented. His friend, I believe, furnished me with some letters before writing that to him; I burnt them all but the first, which is in that drawer behind you. As she said this, she reached her husband the key, who opened it, took out the letter, and upon perusal and comparing it, found it to be the same hand. Pray, said Philemon, how came you by these letters; I found them, said Myrtilla, at the bottom of the garden, and believe some body threw them over the low hedge out of the lane. That some body, replied he, was your precious brother-in-law, Papilio. You now know the occasion of my walks through it; I found him skulking under the hedge there several times, and the last time threatened to whip him; for knowing what an excellent tutor he has at home, I thought he came thi-
ther

ther for no good. They say, added Dorilus, that women are very inconstant, we must however in justice acquit my mother-in-law, Rodope, who has never gone one step out of her road ever since I knew her. Well, she always told my father I was a fool, and now she has made me one, but not a greater than you, Philemon. That is still to be proved, said Myrtilla, unless you think his being in love with Sylvia is evidence sufficient, and in that case I doubt I shall acquit him. No, no, mistress, replied Dorilus, that you will not do, when you have heard my tale, and he has answered a few questions that I have to ask him. What are those, said Philemon? As I live I will tell you the truth. In the first place then, said Dorilus, let us hear why you courted my landlord's daughter, without applying to him. This affair, replied he, is of three years standing, and Sylvia always assured me, that her father was one of the severest men in the world; that he told her every day of his life, who ever married her without his consent, should marry a beggar; and that he would turn her out of doors, if ever he knew that she spoke to a man not recommended by himself. Do you call these reasons, said Dorilus? Why, answered Philemon, I cannot say they are very good ones, but the truth is I liked her, and she did not dislike me at first sight. Very well, returned Dorilus, and if I had not taken it in my head to air myself on the top of the tall elm, you might have married a beggar; for trust me old Corydon will not break his word to man, woman, or his own child. But if you will rest the matter here, and confess yourself a greater fool than I,

it is not impossible that you may be put in a way to marry your mistress, and to acquire all her father's estate. That is as much as to say, Dorilus, returned his friend, that if I will confess myself a fool, you will make me a happy man. Myrtila, I submit, and you may give judgment, I am a greater fool than Dorilus, notwithstanding his airing upon the tall elm. Will that do ? Why it shall do, said Dorilus, tho' I could make you air yourself upon that elm too, in order to obtain the advice I am able to give you. You must therefore be a greater fool than I, since you stand in need of a fool's advice. But not to keep you longer in suspense, what I have to tell you is in few words this.

What Sylvia told you of her father, was a very indifferent sketch of the picture of an honest old man. He is towards seventy, and most people at that age have their humours ; he was my father's landlord and is mine, as such he has been kind to both. I ought to speak well of him, for he has so good an opinion of me, that about a week ago, he sent for me in order to enquire the character of one Philemon, a neighbour of my father's, who I believe is the person he has pitched upon to be his son-in-law. Now my friend, will you accept the daughter's invitation, or stay for the father's. It will make but a trifling difference, and amongst friends, methinks a day should not break squares. Bless me, Philemon, why you look a little foolish upon the matter, what say you, man, would you not have been content to have let your teeth chatter for an hour or two upon the tall elm, to hear such a piece of news as this when you came down ? I believe I should, returned Philemon ; I find

we are but bad judges of our own affairs, and that when we venture into bye paths, in order to make a shorter cut, we are in danger of many more disasters, than if we had kept the high road. It shall be a warning to me for life; but some method must be found to inform Sylvia, that her father's choice and her own are the very same. That care shall be mine, said Dorilus, I will make Corydon a visit to morrow morning, and will find means to give Sylvia a hint before I leave the house. Come, neighbour, one cup more to her health, and instead of repining that we are fools, let us be thankful to heaven that we are not knaves, and that our hearts are not of the same make with that of Rodope.

In a few days after the marriage of Philemon, the mirth which it occasioned in the house of Dorilus, was turned into mourning by the death of Melissa. She kept her bed a short time, during which, Myrtilla constantly attended her, as much edified by her discourses, as afflicted by the misery in which she saw her. That good woman left her all she had, which was no great matter, together with her cottage, orchard, and garden, which she had purchased, desiring her to do something for her maid Phillis, tho' she was far from deserving it; at the request of Myrtilla, Philemon took her into his house, and his wife was very kind to her. As soon as the burial was over, Dorilus and his wife returned home, and shut up the cottage of their good old friend for the present.

All this time Rodope was in the utmost anxiety, her son-in-law came no longer near her; Philemon's marriage was another eye sore, but

the death of Melissa gave her a little comfort; and Phillis had not been three days in her new place, before Rodope made an acquaintance with her, in order to fish out, if possible, something of her old mistress's history; but though the wench was naturally mischievous and silly, she was able to tell her nothing, except that Melissa spent a great part of her time in prayers, and the rest in reading good books. As this did not at all answer her purpose, she was on the point of giving over her inquiries; when she accidentally started a circumstance, that she thought led her to that point, which of all others she was best pleased to hear, because at first sight it had a very ill look.

She was asking Phillis, what discourses Melissa had with Myrtilia before her death; the girl told her what she could remember, or what she invented, and amongst the rest, that the latter shewed her mistress a locket, which she told her she had safely kept, and never failed to look upon it every Sunday evening, to which she attributed all the good fortune of her life. Oh! the witch! the witch! cried Rodope, I thought that young slut had something more than prudence to guide her; and so it seems she is indebted for her good luck to the devil, and my precious daughter-in-law's portion was a charm. Harkee, Phillis, said she, if you can contrive to bring me that locket, I will give you this piece of gold, which, by the way, was one of the only three that at this time she had in the world. Phillis promised to do her best, and said, she was to go to the house of Dorilus the very next Sunday, Myrtilia having promised to give her the best part of her mistress's cloaths. Rodope
bid

bid her be sure not to say a word of what had passed between them, and made her many fine promises of what she would do for her, and that nobody should ever know the true reason of the good will she bore her.

At the time of this admirable conversation, Papilio lay very ill, and though his mother was as fond of him as she could be of any thing, yet the hopes of blasting Myrtilla's character for ever, took up at least as much of her attention as the care of her only son. On the Monday morning, Phillis returned with the joyful news, that while her young mistress was looking up the cloaths for her, she saw the box in which the locket was in one of the drawers, and with great dexterity clap'd it into her pocket. An exchange was presently made of the box for the piece of gold, and notwithstanding the nurse told her, that her son would hardly live over the night, she left him to lock herself up and examine this charm. Upon opening the box, she found the locket was of a kind of blue stone set in silver, of an oval form, with these words in little gold points upon the front. *Truth is irreproachable, and innocence invincible.* On the backside was this inscription: *Modesty and frugality keep in peace, and keep out necessity;* upon opening it, she found these words studded within: *Industry and good humour, are the pillars of female government,——when domestic interests render obedience inexpedient.* Then to my sorrow, said she, when she had done reading, they are both faints ! She put the locket into the box, and having laid it up safely, threw herself upon her bed in such an agony as is not to be described. As soon as she came a little to herself,

herself, she went to attend her son, whom she found dying. She saw him expire, and then relapsed into a fit of distraction and despair. Those about her thought she would have died likewise, but at last she recovered strength enough to retire to her own room, where the nurse and her servant put her to bed.

The next day, she sent the man that took care of her country business, to request Dorilus and Myrtilla to come to her the Sunday following, if she survived till that time, which would depend upon the answer returned by them. The poor fellow delivered his message very punctually, and described his mistress's condition with such simplicity and sorrow, that Dorilus and Myrtilla, notwithstanding all that had passed, sent her word, they would certainly come then or before, if she desired it. Upon receiving this message, Rodope recovered her spirits, rose the next day, and gave directions for the funeral, which was performed the evening following. On the Sunday morning, she dressed herself very decently in mourning, and received her son-in-law and his wife, (who were in mourning likewise) with great calmness and composure, and after the first ceremonies were over, and the company that came to condole with her gone, she desired them to walk up stairs.

When they were come into the best room of the house, and she had seated them in two chairs close by each other, taking hold of Dorilus by the right hand and Myrtilla with the left, she kneel'd down before them, and then with a clear and firm voice, very different from the tone in which she usually spoke, (which had

a kind of whining softness) she delivered herself thus.

“ Behold at your feet a miserable old wretch,
 “ covered with crimes. I have dissembled all
 “ my life long, and have done you both all the
 “ injuries that lay in my power, which, though
 “ many and great, were but few in comparison
 “ of what I intended. With some you are ac-
 “ quainted ; but those which have escaped your
 “ knowledge are numberless. I ask, with all
 “ humility and sincerity, both your pardons ; I
 “ expect this from your goodness, and will in
 “ some measure merit it by my penitence, of
 “ which, and of the truth of this confession,
 “ I will give you convincing proofs. For the
 “ love of heaven, for the sake of your father’s
 “ ashes, in respect to these grey hairs and wi-
 “ thered limbs, pity and forgive me.”

Dorilus and Myrtilla, whom amazement had almost changed into statues, rose and lifted her up, embraced her tenderly, and promised her, not only forgiveness, but affection, duty and assistance, to the very utmost of their power. It is enough, said she, my children, but let me try in some measure to deserve it. She then went to her drawers, and when she returned, she presented the box with the locket to Myrtilla. There, said she, is that precious jewel I bribed Phillis to steal from you ; and here, said she, turning to Dorilus, is the deed, by which I hold your father’s estate. As she spoke these words, she tore his seal from it, and then delivered it into his hands. All that I have to desire, said she, is this, either come and live here with me, or suffer me to come and live with you for a few months, that the neighbour-
 hood

hood may take notice of our reconciliation ; be convinced that it is sincere, and that Rodope is no more the woman she was. After that you shall give me Melissa's cottage, where I will reside the remainder of my days, and strive to imitate her.

They readily yielded to her request, staid with her ten days, and then carried her to their own house, where Philemon and his wife came to see her, and where the children of Dorilus always called her grandmother, and paid her the same respect, as if they had been descended from her. At the expiration of six months, she desired to remove to the cottage, and tho' Dorilus and Myrtilla pressed her with the greatest tenderness, to depart from that circumstance of their promise, she could not be prevailed upon, so that at length they were forced to comply : she remained there in the exercise of the most exemplary piety, and distributed in alms the greatest part of the rent of Stephano's estate, which, notwithstanding the deed was cancelled, Dorilus duly paid her for above three years, and then died with great resignation and penitence.

Such are the examples that are sometimes furnished from private life ; such the lamentable consequences of female vices ; such the happy effects of female virtues. The sex is unjustly detested or derided for the former, and without reason adored or admired for the latter. Every woman is answerable for her own conduct, and for that only. There have no doubt been many Rodope's, and there have been also some Melissa's, and not a few Myrtilla's. Let us then study to be impartial, give freely that tribute of praise which is due to the virtuous ; censure the
vicious

vicious with the same freedom till they become penitents, and then forgive them. But let us still remember, that we are none of us perfect, that Myrtilla herself was once on the point of falling, and that Rodope, though wicked and old, was at last reclaimed. These are the truths my story teaches, and I hope not disagreeably.

I know that I am exempted from the necessity of closing with verse, and perhaps I had better not have waved that exemption; but Constantia and Beaumont are lovers of poetry, and so is Mr. Anguish too, though he dissembles it; for whose sakes therefore, I run the hazard of standing in need of a particular pardon, when I might have taken shelter under a general indemnity.

*The soft jonquil in liv'ry gay,
Sweet present of all charming May;
Lillies array'd in virgin bloom,
Exhaling far their rich perfume;
Or what in smell surpasses those,
The fragrance of the tuberoze.
Are not alike to ev'ry brain,
But some afflict with shooting pain;
As if their sweets were too intense,
And quite oppress'd the fainting sense.*

*But vi'lets in their robe of blue,
In odour gentle as in hue;
The briar sweet, the hawthorn fair
That scent, yet scarcely scent the air;
The woodbines creeping hedges o'er,
Wild nature's odorif'rous store;
The meadows, flowers, the myrtle shade,
Or steams of hay when newly made;*

The

*The morning gale, the ev'ning breeze,
Please ev'ry taste and ever please.*

*Thus in describing human ways,
Who midst superior folly strays;
Is bold in thought, is free to strike,
And hits the scene extremely like;
'Tis ten to one the tale allures,
And scatters wounds instead of cures.
But in the humble vale of life,
Describing love, describing strife.
If nature with unerring light,
Direct the artist's pencil right;
Be sure the truth he'll still express,
And passions wear their native dress.
The springs of motion all appear,
And ev'ry act's extremely clear;
His skill th' attentive audience charms,
The tale delights, the moral warms.
And if a woman this could do,
That woman sure would please you too.*

We have reason, said Sir Lawrence Testy, addressing himself to lady Constantia, to value ourselves not a little upon the acquisition of Olivia. She has not only entered into the spirit of our amusements, but has, I think, left us almost all behind her: this story of her's is in a new manner, and as satisfactory as surprising. There is no doubt, that it will raise a noble spirit of emulation amongst the young members of our society; and though I was prodigiously delighted with their past performances, I must never the less own, that my expectations will be now disappointed, if they do not surpass themselves. Olivia has reason to be pleased, returned lady Con-

Constantia with the compliment you have made her; but I am afraid you have alarmed Henrietta, and as for the rest of our young people, you know they are absent. We have reason indeed to be grateful for a relation finely diversified with grave reflections, and pleasant strokes of humour, and which takes into its compass, almost every age and circumstance of private life. The happy invention, the regular conduct, the easy and natural winding up of this story, must certainly have cost Olivia a great deal of pains; and yet her easy manner of telling it, took away all appearance of labour, and made us believe, that she entertained us without any expence of thought or trouble to herself, which made it still more acceptable. When it shall come to my turn, I doubt the case will be very different, and that the lustre of Olivia's relation, will receive some farther help from such a foil. But be that as it will, I shall be far from envying talents that have given me so much pleasure, exerted in a manner so obliging, and accompanied with a modest uneasiness in hearing praises that she has so well deserved.

I protest, said Mr. Pensive, that amongst the several kinds of moral history, with which I am acquainted, there is none that seems so difficult to succeed in as this. For generally speaking, where there is nothing great or surprising to assist the action, and employ the attention of the audience, such pieces are apt to seem flat. The striking out of incidents on a plan, the compass of which appears to be so very narrow, is in a manner hardly practicable, and to enliven these incidents with perspicuous and natural descriptions, seems still harder; so that when it

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is done it looks like enchantment, and we cannot help being amazed, how so fair, so regular, and so beautiful an edifice could be erected, without calling in that kind of machinery, which would have been inconsistent with a piece of this nature delivered in prose. Olivia will forgive these slight and hasty touches of criticism, for as nobody feels a greater pleasure in bestowing praise than I do, so I am particularly desirous to shew from the manner of my commendations, that they are the real effects of sentiment, and not unmeaning testimonies of common complaisance.

The pleasure of having conversed for many years with Olivia, added Mr. Anguish, and the knowledge I have of the many valuable qualities that lady possesses, induced me to believe, that she would acquit herself upon this occasion as on every other, with equal merit and address. But I must fairly acknowledge, there is nobody in this company more surpris'd than I, at the method she has taken. I had not the smallest suspicion, that she would have made choice of a pastoral adventure, or that having spent the best part of her life in the great world, and amongst the most polite company, she should neglect all she had heard or seen on such an occasion. Yet I must at the same time confess, that it was very judiciously done, and that we are no less indebted to her for this agreeable surprise, than for the variety of ornaments, which she has bestowed upon a subject, that would scarce have attracted such universal applause, in any other hand but her own. I congratulate her sincerely upon the discovery of this new perfection, which gives me hopes, that I may some time or other,

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be so lucky as to hear her thus employed again, and as incredible as it may seem, I should not at all despair of being as delighted, and as much amazed as I am now.

This gentleman, said Henrietta, has in a manner precluded me from speaking, by expressing much better than I could have done all that I meant to say; I shall therefore only take the liberty of remarking, that her verse is extremely *a-pro-pôs*, and contains very judicious reasons for her disappointing Mr. Anguish's expectation; so that I am satisfied she stands in no need, either of a general or of a particular pardon, in the opinion of any of those she is pleased to treat as her judges—Permit me, my dear Henrietta, cried Olivia, to put an end to this discourse, to which I shall never be able to make any return, unless it be, by desiring Sir Lawrence Testy, to favour us to-morrow night with something that may warrant such praises. After having said this, she withdrew, and the company immediately broke up.



THE
FAITHFUL SHEPHERD;

OR, THE
TARTAR PRINCE.

An Oriental History.



WHAT I have to offer for the entertainment of this evening, said Sir Lawrence Testy, in virtue of Olivia's nomination, would perhaps have pleased you better, if you were not prepossessed by the regularity of the method, the natural and noble sentiments, and above all, the pathetic conclusion of that admirable story, which charmed you so much last night. But as there is beauty as well as use in the variety of seasons, and as there is a certain degree of satisfaction, in beholding the face of heaven bespangled with glittering stars in a frosty night, as well as in contemplating the serene and cloudless azure of a summer's day ; so I flatter myself, that the wild and extravagant scenes, which I shall present to your view, will not be altogether displeasing, though they succeed to a relation not less elegant in its form than elevated in its nature, and in which

which the passions of the human mind, were represented with a force and precision ; which though I greatly admire, I must admit to be inimitable. The visions of an old man are of another kind, and participate of his temper ; extravagant in some respects, from the remains of that fire which animated his youth ; serious in others, from the reflections of his sedate years, and perhaps a little distracted by the injuries his memory and judgment have sustained from time and accidents.

There is a strange humour that has prevailed in all ages amongst those who esteem themselves, and perhaps not without reason, as it were the better sort of mankind. I have sometimes thought that this might be well enough stiled, the barbarism of civilized nations, since it consists in branding with a note of infamy, people who inhabit countries at a distance from our own, and taking it for granted, that inasmuch as their manners differ from ours, they vary from the true standard of sense and politeness, and verge more and more towards folly and brutality. I call this barbarism, because at the same time that it taints people learned and well bred, it is the true and genuine characteristic of those unpolished nations ; that after a long acquaintance with and just account of their customs, we with some degree of reason term barbarous. The Laplanders and the Samoides have this notion precisely, and so have the uneducated Russians ; they have no conception of wisdom and politeness, but what they borrow from their own heads, and the consideration of their own behaviour ; so that according to their own notions, they only are wise and well bred ; and
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the word stranger, imports with them, pretty near the same thing with stupid or brutal. It is in reality the prevalence of this notion that is the great bar to improvement : it was this that the great legislator of Russia, who flourished in ours, or at least in my time, found so very difficult to eradicate ; and therefore I esteem it the characteristic of barbarous nations, and so far as it any where remains a relic of barbarism.

This will appear still more clearly, if we recollect, that before travelling became a part of genteel education, we had very strange notions, even of our nearest neighbours ; and though there is nothing clearer than that the melioration of our lands, the extension of our trade, and the improvement of our knowledge, has been the gradual effects of our acquaintance with foreign countries and foreign nations ; yet a rivetted aversion for foreigners, and a strong propensity to support that aversion, by painting them upon all occasions in monstrous or ridiculous colours, prevailed long amongst us. Neither can I make so great a compliment to my contemporaries, as to say it is now absolutely wore out, or that with all our knowledge, all our learning, all our improvements, of which however, I have a very elevated opinion, we have utterly extirpated this prejudice. Yet if we candidly consider it, we cannot help perceiving, that it is utterly reconcilable with freedom of thought, with the principles of natural equity, or with the desire of arriving at truth, which certainly is what it ever was and ever must be, the true foundation of real and useful science ; the single criterion that

that must distinguish between solid attainments and superficial shadows.

At certain seasons of my life, it has been no unpleasing, possibly no unprofitable employment, to look a little more closely into this matter, than most other men perhaps have done, and the consequence of this has been, that I have discovered, even through the mist of those obscure and partial relations, those fragments of their own histories, and other glimmering lights that have reached to us as high flights of the human faculties, as natural and consistent schemes of policy, and as shining and illustrious instances of heroic virtue, among nations that are commonly supposed to be sunk into the lowest dregs of barbarity, as the most authentic authors have recorded of such, as we are taught to revere from our infancy, for being the perfect models of wisdom and politeness. This, I think, is bringing things to the true test, that of nature and facts. We may as well quarrel with people for being of different complexions, or wearing other habits than ourselves, as pretend to hate, ridicule, or despise them merely on the score of their living in a manner opposite to ours, and practising customs, which amongst us would appear absurd. For if these are agreeable to the country in which they inhabit, to their situation in respect to the nations that confine upon them, and to the natural lights of reason and experience, we have no just ground to treat them in this manner; and at all events, it becomes us to be, in some measure at least, masters of the evidence on both sides, before we pretend to decide, with an air of authority, and stamp the character of barbarous upon any nation. We see in common life, that positiveness is the effects of narrow thinking,

and obstinacy the result of a weak judgment ; both these taken together, produce, what may be called, the pride of ignorance, superlatively great, and superlatively ridiculous.

Who has not heard of the Tartars ? Who speaks not of them as the meanest and basest, the vilest, lowest and most illiterate nation upon earth ? Who is it that thinks of them in any other light than with horror and contempt, and who supposes, that there is any thing of genius, spirit, or virtue to be found amongst them ? Yet if a man of wit was to attempt their apology, he might find materials very far from being despicable, and that might enable him to raise a lasting reputation from the defence even of these dirty clients. If nobility consists, in being able to ascertain a long roll of ancestors, there are very few nations that can, in this respect, compare with the Tartars. For let them be ever so stupid, there is not a man amongst them, who is not able to trace his family up to the chief of his hord, and that chief again can unravel his line, with all the skill and dexterity of a Welch genealogist. One of their princes has given us a notable instance of this sort. His book is dry and unpleasant indeed, but that arises from the subject ; however, there is as much of certainty and perspicuity in it, as in any thing of the kind, and is so far perfect, that if we had not a translation of it in our own language, I doubt whether many people in this country would believe it. In respect to military virtues again, they are either general or particular : but in general the Tartars are certainly a very martial people, and have done as much by force of arms, as any nation that ever handled them. The bounds of their empire were once the most distant

tant ocean, of which we know any thing to the east, and part of Hungary to the west. At this very hour, besides those immense countries which have been always their inheritance; they possess three or four of the greatest empires in the world in right of conquest. They rule in China, they are sovereigns in the Indies, where the very title of Great Mogul speaks their race; while Persia had a monarchy, its monarchs deduced their origin from the Tartars; the imperial line of Ottoman springs likewise from them; and it is from thence that the Khan of the Crim Tartars is owned the presumptive heir of that empire, if the Ottoman house should fail.

As to the military virtues of particular men, which are what principally constitute a hero, they have appeared with as great lustre amongst the Tartars as amongst the Persians, Greeks, or Romans, not to ascend so high as that great conqueror, who from a condition, that was rather flattered than described, as that of a petty prince, raised himself by the pure strength of his abilities and valour, to the possession of dominions wider than those of Alexander; I will content myself, with mentioning only Tamerlane, who though very imperfectly, is yet better known to us, and who, beyond all controversy, was one of the greatest captains, and one of the ablest statesmen of his time. It is a folly therefore to fancy that these people have been particularly ill used by nature, or that a nation, who have spread their power so far and maintained it so long, who have subdued and supplanted those, who by their victories, made themselves masters of all the eastern countries, that formed either the Greek or Roman empire,

are, after all, the last and lowest of mankind. We may abhor the fierceness, cruelty, ambition, turbulence, or prædatory disposition of a people, and yet allow them some good qualities. For whatever self-love may persuade us in a great degree, and some neighbours of ours, that I could mention, in a still higher degree : there is really no such thing upon this globe, as a country without blemishes, or a nation without defects ; as on the other hand, experience, though somewhat late, has convinced us, that there is scarce any part of the earth uninhabitable, and that wherever people do inhabit, let the climate, the soil, and its produce be what they will, the natives are not only satisfied therewith, but delighted. For it is a boon, and that no small one, that providence has bestowed upon every son of Adam, in fixing a firm belief in his breast, that his native country is Paradise, and in comparison of it a wilderness all the world besides. With much ado indeed reason, fortified by education, brings us to entertain some doubt of this ; and if so, why should not we suspect the vulgar doctrine, as to customs and manners, may be likewise a mistake ?

But it may, in truth it will be said, that the chief circumstances which we know with any certainty, concerning those who still retain the name and original manners of the Tartars, plainly point them out to be barbarians. Let us then hear what these are : in the first place they are vagabonds, and rove continually from place to place. Admitting this so to be, there is nothing in it unreasonable or immoral, and they may with equal reason reproach us for sitting still. The Turks, the Persians, and indeed all the eastern

eastern nations are at a loss to know what the Europeans mean, when they speak of taking a walk. They understand marching in time of war, and travelling on the score of business in time of peace, but to walk for pleasure, surpasses an Oriental comprehension. Is it therefore ridiculous? In the next place, the Tartars eat horse-flesh. Why so do the politest nations in Europe in the time of famine, long sieges, or when they can get nothing else. The native Indians eat nothing that had life, and esteemed feeding upon a cow as the greatest impiety. We treat this as superstition and folly, because we are accustomed to eat beef. The Tartars think as we do, notwithstanding they eat horse-flesh; in this case they reason just as well as we; and there can be nothing more idle, than to make either wisdom or politeness consist in the bare eating this or that kind of animals, or in eating no animals at all. Lastly, the Tartars are very bad neighbours, they make inroads upon the countries that border upon them; they burn and spoil without mercy; they carry away persons of all ranks, sexes and ages, and afterwards sell them for slaves. This indeed is very bad; but are there not some nations who do worse; who infest not only their neighbours, but even the most distant parts of the world? And is there any material difference, whether this be done on horseback or in ships? Is burning and spoiling always infamous, or only infamous in Tartars? Then as to the slaves, they at least take them by force, and expose themselves before they enslave others; and if for this they are barbarous, what shall we say of those, who make long voyages to purchase slaves, without any scruple as to

rank, sex, or age, dealing in them, as if they were cattle, and treat them much worse than they do their beasts. But we will not barely excuse the Tartars ; let us try if their customs and manners may not be seen, as well as ours, in a favourable point of light.

It is not my intention to fright the ladies, with any of those hideous names that appear in our books of voyages, history, and geography, for these would very little answer my intention ; I shall therefore proceed to observe, that there are three different kinds of Tartars, that is, who have something specifically different in their manner of living. The first are those who live in that vast country, which lies on the back of the mountains of China, and these are the original and unmixed Tartars. They are the most peaceable of any, for they spend their lives in moving along the banks of some river, seeking the refreshment of the cool air, that blows from the north in the summer, and retiring from its chilly blasts in the winter. The people of distinction amongst these Tartars lead a very quiet and a very happy life ; they are much on horseback, and spend most of their mornings in hunting, when they return to dine with their families, and afterwards amuse themselves in some agreeable meadow with their pipe, a kind of sherbet, and a pleasant companion ; or else they read themselves, or have somebody to read to them books of poetry, morality, or history. You may perhaps smile at Tartar learning, in which however they think themselves very refined, you shall judge with what reason. There is no single man amongst them so self-conceited, as to set up for an author ; the making of a
book

book they esteem to be a great thing, in which four heads at least are employed. The first is the man of thought; he traces the subject, expresses his sentiments, and in short lays the foundation. Then comes the man of words, he cloaths every thing in the properest phrases, supplies any defect in method, and where he finds it necessary, retouches and softens the transitions. It passes next to the care of the critic, who is equally nice, as to the sentiment and the language; the other two stand by while he is at work, and he alters nothing, till they are convinced of their own mistake, and the fitness of his correction. It is lastly given to a fine writer, who draws it out fair, and when it has been revised by the other three, it is esteemed worthy of the eye of the public, and not before. Is there any thing sordid or slavish in this sort of life, or shall we say, that men who provide for their ease, their health, and the maintenance of their family, in the manner that best suits with the country that they possess, who satisfy their natural appetites in a cheap and homely way, and yet are elegant and accurate in their literary amusements, ought to be esteemed barbarians? Sure this is too harsh a censure, and what cannot well be justified.

The second kind of Tartars are those that inhabit the countries westward of these; having the Indies and Persia to the south, and the countries belonging to Russia on the north, and on the west. They live in some measure like the former, but where the soil will admit of it, they have towns, in the vicinity of which the lands are cultivated; they have also a great commerce with the neighbouring nations in time

of peace, but are frequently at war with some of them, or amongst themselves. The princes and nobility value themselves upon their activity in managing their horses and arms ; on their hardiness in bearing fatigue, and on their boldness and intrepidity in the field. Their amusements are less innocent and less elegant than the former ; they love feasting after their manner, and will drink to excess ; they have seraglio's like the Turks, neither are they without books of poetry and romances. There is no country in the world more subject to revolutions than this ; for as they are seldom at peace longer than is necessary to recruit their strength ; so in consequence of the vicissitudes of war, he who by birth was but a petty prince, becomes by degrees very potent, forcing many of the tribes in his neighbourhood to submit to the laws that he prescribes, and to follow his standard. On the other hand, this monarch himself, by some extraordinary change of fortune, or his son, before he comes well versed in the arts of war and empire, is defeated or deposed, either by some ambitious neighbour, or in consequence of some domestic conspiracy. Such is the instability of human grandeur here, which might lessen these people very much in our opinions, if we saw it much more constant or less affected by the like accidents any where else.

The third kind of Tartars are those with whom we are best acquainted, inhabiting a country on the confines of Russia, Poland, and Turkey. This nation is less free and independant than the rest of the Tartars ; for though their Khan sometimes assumes the title of emperor, and is considered by his subjects as a sovereign

reign prince; yet is he advanced to that dignity and deposed from it, at the sole will and pleasure of the grand signior, who ventures, very seldom however, to put any of these princes to death, nay, sometimes they are restored many years after they were deposed; and in my time, there has been a Khan, whom the grand signior placed for the fourth time upon the throne. These are the people, who make those horrible irruptions into Russia and Poland, and of whom, though we now speak of them as a herd of lawless banditti, that scarce deserve to be reckoned with other nations; yet there was a time, nor is it far out of memory, when the greatest power in the north paid them an annual tribute. But amongst all the strange stories that we are told of these Tartars, there is one that is very seldom mentioned. The houses of Austria and Bourbon, and that of Ottoman also, are known almost to every peasant in Europe; but that the royal family of the Crim Tartars hath a surname, which is as well known, and as much revered amongst them and their neighbours as any of these, and that the grand signior can raise none but the princes of this family to the regal dignity, is a secret, even to the learned amongst us; and as the assuming this surname, proceeded from an event very remarkable in itself, and which affords an instance of as noble and disinterested a virtue, as is to be found in the politest histories; I will give it you in the best manner I am able, being persuaded, that as it has the charm of novelty, that alone will afford it some recommendation, though, as I have already hinted, it is very far from being destitute of intrinsic worth, if any such thing there be in the actions of men.

Those Tartars were formerly a much more potent people than they are now, or at least part of a nation that were so. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, they possessed the kingdoms of Casan and Astracan, and many other large and fruitful countries in the neighbourhood ; they drew likewise vast contributions from Russia and other countries ; but as prosperity is apt to corrupt the morals of all men, so the Mirzas, which is the title of the Tartar princes, grew insolent and disobedient to the Khan, who was likewise become luxurious and rapacious ; less active than in the former part of his life ; more cautious of exposing his person, and at the same time more jealous of his authority, and desirous of levying larger duties or acknowledgments, than had been paid to any of his predecessors. It was this that exposed him to the general hatred of his subjects, for the Mirzas following his example, oppressed their people, and whenever they complained, pretended that all they did was at the command, and for the sole profit of the Khan, though indeed he did not receive the tenth part of it.

When once disaffection becomes general, it can hardly fail of producing some sinister event. The Mirzas seeing the people grew daily more and more discontented ; and not doubting, but they should find their account in a revolution, deposed the Khan, and advanced one of his sons to supreme power. Whether the young prince really made an ill use of his authority, or whether the Mirzas only made that a pretence, or were afraid that he would in time take measures to lessen their authority, so it was, that in a very short space they removed him not only from the throne, but from the land

land of the living, and gave the title of Khan to another prince of the blood; who perceiving that he should reign no longer than he was a creature of theirs, did every public act that they demanded; but at the same time secretly endeavoured to influence the bulk of the nation to complain of their oppressions, and to infuse an opinion into them, that he was himself well inclined to redress their grievances, if they would put it in his power. If the princes had given him sufficient space, he would in all probability have effected his purpose; but they making an early discovery of his intentions, for in a corrupted state no secret can ever be kept, resolved to be beforehand with him, and according to the usual practice amongst such men, secure themselves at his expence.

Yet they were far from finding this so easy a task as either of the former; the Tartars in general entertained a good opinion of the Khan, and when they attempted to spread reports to his disadvantage, they discovered that they were not only disbelieved, but that their subjects, as far as they durst, murmured at what they had formerly done, alledging, that they were more hardly used than in the old Khan's time, and that they were not ignorant by whom. The principal Mirzas having held a private consultation on the state of their affairs, resolved to propose an irruption into Russia with all their forces, which they knew would be pleasing to the nation in general; who were desirous of making themselves some amends in time of war, for being plundered and harassed through the avarice of their princes in time of peace. The Khan himself was not averse to this measure;

for he knew that being in the field, he must have the absolute command, and he was in hopes of converting this to his advantage. All the necessary preparations being made, they entered upon this expedition, with a body of forty thousand horse, and penetrated to within sight of Moscow, carrying off every thing that was valuable, besides a prodigious multitude of captives.

In these expeditions it is the custom of the Tartars to strike out in several bodies to the right and left, and forming a kind of semicircular march to join again at a certain place, and to retire from thence, driving their captives and booty before them, with all the dispatch imaginable into their own country. It is a maxim of theirs to avoid fighting, if possible ; and if that cannot be done, to fight as little as possible ; for as they rather aim at plunder, than at the possession of the country which they invade, it passes with them for the highest mark of military skill, so to contrive their expeditions, as that they may gain much with little loss ; which if they can effect, they neither value the reputation of a victory, nor are at all ashamed, if the hastiness of their retreat be looked upon as flight. It is from hence that they are despised, as barbarous and cowardly enemies ; whereas in truth, they act right upon their own principles, how indefensible soever they be ; since in war, he is certainly the conqueror, who carries his point, let that point be what it will, or whatever measures he pursues to accomplish it.

In the beginning of this expedition the Khan was extremely active ; and at the head of a small body of chosen horse led the van, as in

retreat he brought up the rear. But when they came back the Khan was missing, nor could any body tell when or where he was killed; neither were they able to learn that he was fallen into the hands of the Russians, though several emissaries were employed for that purpose. The Mirzas however caused the same proportion of the booty to be levied, as if he had been there present, pretending to be in deep affliction for the loss of so good a prince, and scattered rumours from time to time, of his being alive, and on his road home. In a little time, a spirit of mutiny was discovered among the people, and they insisted upon having a new Khan. The Mirzas upon this held a fresh consultation, and under pretence of meeting for a new election, each of them brought with him a small body of troops, upon whom he could absolutely depend; promising to call the princes of the blood royal together, and to choose from amongst them him, who in virtue and valour most resembled their deceased monarch, whom they applauded as the mildest and best prince that had reigned over them for a long series of years: all this however was only to cajole and amuse the people; for they had privately resolved upon quite another measure; and perceiving plainly, that some time or other they should have a Khan that would rule them; they thought it more for their interest to have no Khan at all, a scheme which they executed as successfully, as with secrecy it had been contrived.

The princes of the Khan's house were now reduced to three brothers at mens estate, the eldest of whom had two sons, one a boy about twelve years old, and the other a child in the nurse's

nurse's arms. The Mirzas held their council at the house of the eldest prince, and sent for the other two thither ; the noise of so many people coming, and the rudeness of some of their attendants, alarmed the women to such a degree, that before the council was fully assembled, the nurse fled away with the young child to the hut of a poor Tartar, who being lame, and somewhat in years, maintained himself by a little flock that he kept upon the mountains. The Mirzas, when they were all come together, and had surrounded the palace with the troops, in which they could place confidence, fell upon the three princes, instead of proceeding to an election, and cut them to pieces, after which they strangled the boy, and made a strict search after the little child, but to no purpose ; for the nurse leaving him behind, had returned to learn what the matter was, and crying out violently when they entered the womens apartment, was killed by one of the guard ; so that all means of information, as to this only remnant of the line of their ancient princes, was entirely lost.

As soon as this dreadful scene was over, the Mirzas gave out, to cover their own wickedness, that the three princes had formed a secret design against their lives, and that what they had done, was purely from a motive of self-preservation. The people, who saw no remedy, were forced to swallow this story, though very few of them could digest it. The Mirzas in a short time quarrelled amongst themselves ; the most powerful soon subdued the little ones, and the Kipzak Tartars, from being one considerable monarchy, split into several little principalities, on some of which historians have had the
goodness

goodness to confer the title of kingdoms. This alone was sufficient to weaken them very much, but their jealousies and misunderstandings contributed to it still more, for these new Khans were continually quarrelling, and invading each other's dominions, to the no small satisfaction of their neighbours, who by this means were in security for the present, and not without hopes of being better able to deal with them in time to come. Yet as all great mischiefs usually produce in the end their own cure; so it is highly probable, that some or other of these princes, or their successors, would in a course of years, either by conquest or consent, have united them again under their old form of government, to which the people in general were better inclined, than to this new one; which as it had its rise in blood, so it produced nothing but oppression and confusion.

But while things were in this situation, the famous John Basilowitz had rendered himself an effectual sovereign in Russia, where, as barbarous as the people are thought to be, the prime nobility had struck out a very extraordinary kind of policy, and by elevating their great dukes to honours, rather divine than human, had stripped them of all real power, and suffered them to enjoy nothing of their vast dominions, but the duchy of Muscovy, which served to feed their domestics, and to maintain the exterior parade of a useless and unsubstantial grandeur. This great duke John, first setting them together by the ears, and then subduing them one after another, made himself a formidable monarch; and having received intelligence of the misunderstandings amongst his most dangerous
neighbours,

neighbours the Tartars ; he resolved to lay hold of this opportunity, to repay them the injuries they had done his predecessors, and to invade their countries, with as much violence, and as little ceremony, as they were wont to shew in their inroads on the territories of Russia. But before we speak of his conquests, it will be proper to say something of what became of the young Tartar prince, who was snatched in so extraordinary a manner, from that ruin which overwhelmed all the rest of his family, and had extinguished, for a time, the very monarchy itself.

The poor man, to whose care he was committed, had an only daughter, whose husband perished in the expedition into Russia, and left her with a girl sucking at her breast ; the young prince shared the milk of this infant, and grew up with her, whom he believed to be his sister. The old Tartar took all the care of him that was possible, and taught him as much as he was able, which we may imagine did not render him either very learned, or very accomplished. This education however had no bad effect ; it made him hardy and robust ; brought him to endure the severity of the seasons, and to be content with a little, and that too none of the best. It enured him to fatigue, and to a life of simplicity and poverty, as the example of the old man taught him mildness and probity. This last may be esteemed a virtue, strange amongst Tartars, by such as are not acquainted with them, but the fact is quite otherwise. The notions they have of war, make them believe, that all the violences they then commit are lawful ; and as they are daily exposed to the like
from

from their enemies, and sold by them for slaves in the same manner that they sell others, this is no strange thing. In respect to civil and private life, however, they are generally speaking men of upright minds, very hospitable and compassionate to each other, and tho' theft is not severely punished, yet it is so infamous, that as it cannot be practised for want, every one being willing to impart assistance to his neighbour; when it is once detected, the offender is so detested and despised, that he generally speaking finds it necessary to shift his quarters and leave the country. In the hut therefore of this poor shepherd, if the Tartar prince learned but little, that little was good, and at the same time he saw no vices, and consequently was not in danger of being infected by them. He knew not that he was born to any better life than that he led, and therefore was without ambition. All his employment was to tend a few sheep, and to assist the woman he took to be his mother, in such little offices of the family as his strength enabled him to perform, so that as he lived without hopes, he lived also without care and without fear.

It is the opinion of many, that there is something extraordinary in a noble descent, and if this notion could be esteemed any where well founded it must be among the Tartars, who are beyond question the most scrupulous in preserving the purity of their blood, to make use of their own expression, of any people in the world. Whether this was really the case, or whether the lessons that were continually given him by the old Tartar, prompted the boy to exert himself in an extraordinary manner, so it was, that in riding, shooting, throwing the dart, leaping,
and

and swimming, he was so dextrous as to raise the admiration, even of those who had practised all these exercises during their whole lives. He had also, according to the notions entertained by his countrymen, a wonderful faculty in speaking, which, as he grew up, brought him and the old shepherd to every feast in the neighbourhood, where the youth repeated the traditionary histories of his own ancestors without knowing them so to be, with an air and a vivacity, that at once astonished and delighted his audience. In this way, and in this gradual progress through every art and exercise that his guardian could teach, the young man passed seventeen years and some months, when an accident drew him out of his obscurity, and produced him to the Tartar nation as the object of their hopes, and the last heir of their ancient line of princes.

The Russians easily overthrew the two most considerable of the Tartar principalities, and flushed with their victories, meditated nothing less than the destruction and extirpation of the whole people. In this dismal situation the Mirzas themselves saw the necessity they were under of electing and obeying a single chief, but their jealousies and animosities were so great, that it was impossible for them to unite their suffrages in favour of any one of their own number, or rather they knew each other so well, that they had little or no hopes that any amongst them should be able to support the dignity of Khan in so critical a conjuncture, in a manner suitable to the office, to the general expectation, and the necessities of the publick. However as their losses continually increased, as these losses not only weakened, but dispirited the people,
and

and as they saw plainly there was no time to lose, they found themselves compelled to direct a general assembly of the Mirzas, and at the same time to draw together all their forces, that they might be in a condition to act pursuant to the resolutions that in this assembly should be taken.

At this council, notwithstanding the emergency upon which it was called, very high debates arose, and in all probability, instead of putting an end to the publick confusion, it would have served only to increase it, if a certain prince, whose great age and high birth made him venerable, tho' his power was very inconsiderable, had not undertaken to moderate these heats, and to offer to their thoughts a proposal for putting an end to them. He began with shewing them that it was not the power of the Russians, but their own misunderstandings that had already lost them the best part of their country; he next insisted, that by their own arts they had originally raised that spirit of diffidence and discontent, which they now found it out of their power to quell; and lastly, that tho' they were ashamed to confess it, their fears were so strong, that they were afraid to trust supreme power in any hand, knowing that not without a colour of justice, they might every one be in danger of falling by the hand of him whom their suffrages had made great. He therefore declared it to be his opinion, that the only possible method of saving themselves and their country, was to procure the discovery of that prince to whom of right this post belonged, and who by being thus unexpectedly restored to royalty, might think it reasonable in return to bury in oblivion all the injuries

juries done to his ancestors. This proposition met with unanimous approbation, for tho' they were all desirous of having a Khan, not one of them could bear the thoughts of seeing his equal become in an instant his master.

The next morning publick proclamation was made, that whoever had given shelter to the last prince of the royal blood, should produce him without delay or fear; the women were sent for that knew the marks of the child, and it was also made known that he should be instantly acknowledged for the Khan of all the Kipzack Tartars. Upon this the shepherd relying upon the publick faith, boldly declared that he knew where the young prince was, and that he was ready to stake his life, on the truth of this, provided he could be assured, that the producing him might be attended with safety, for that otherwise he would be cut to pieces rather than reveal a secret, which had slept in his bosom for seventeen years. The old Mirza in the name of the rest, took an oath with all the accustomed forms of the uprightness of their intentions, and at the same time orders were given to prepare every thing for his inauguration.

When all this was done, and the old Tartar plainly saw that the council of Mirzas were in earnest, he took the young man who was standing near him by the hand, and cried with a loud voice, *behold the Khan of the Kipzacks!* The youth was immediately conducted into the house of his father where he was stript naked, the women having previously declared the signs to the Mirzas, who within a little space came out, and signified to the people that he was the undoubted heir of their ancient princes. As such

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he was presently mounted on horseback, shewn in publick, and treated with the respect due to his dignity, and the third day from thence, at the request of the priests and doctors of the law, was fixed upon for his inauguration. This was deferred also for a political reason, that the number of their forces might be increased by such as had the curiosity to come and behold this solemnity, which had not been seen in so many years; and this had so good an effect, that upwards of forty thousand men on horseback were present the next day, when the young prince made his first review, every Mirza being at the head of his own hord and saluting him as he passed by.

While the troops were in the field, the new prince sent for the shepherd whom he had so long considered as his grandfather, and in the presence of all the Mirzas, addressed him in these terms. “ It is to you, venerable old man,
“ that I owe both the preservation of my life
“ in my childhood, the elevation of my fortune,
“ and that in me the Tartars have once more a
“ lawful prince. You were the instrument of
“ heaven in the conduct of this wonderful event,
“ and these princes must consider it as an omen
“ of my happy reign, that I begin it with an
“ act of piety. Say, my father, say what
“ shall be done for you, the first instance of my
“ power shall be gratifying thee in whatever
“ thou wilt request. Thy fidelity to thy trust
“ secured my life, the milk of thy daughter
“ preserved me in my infancy, the labour of
“ thy hands supplied the subsistence of my child-
“ hood, thy care, thy corrections, thy precepts,
“ thy praises, and thy example have made me
“ what

“ what I am. Thus much could a private man
 “ do for his prince, say then, say my father,
 “ what thou would’st have me do for thee.”

The Mohammedans in general are very superstitious in observing the first actions of their princes, in which they fancy they can foresee the character of the future reign, and this was so acceptable to them, that with repeated acclamations of long live the Khan, they bid the old man be as bold in his petition as he had been in declaring his charge, assuring him, that whatever he should demand would be immediately complied with.

The old shepherd heard these promises with very little emotion, and looking first upon the Khan and then upon the princes, he paused for a short space, as if it had been to consider what he should ask, and how to improve so favourable a conjuncture most to his advantage; at length, after saluting the Khan according to the custom of his country, he delivered himself thus.
 “ If heaven committed thee to my protection,
 “ heaven will reward me for the fidelity with
 “ which I discharged my trust. Thy future
 “ actions will shew whether the praises thou
 “ hast bestowed upon me proceed from affection or judgment. But from whatever they
 “ proceed they are to me a sufficient reward,
 “ the condition in which I have lived has been
 “ hard and poor, but in that I have lived honestly and by my labour, I have no reason to
 “ be ashamed or regret. It was the lot that
 “ providence cast in my lap, and with it I have
 “ been always content. When I was young,
 “ perhaps I might have desires, but now I am
 “ old, I have nothing more to wish, than that
 “ I

“ I may live and die in peace. I know that
“ without any assistance I can support that low
“ state of life in which I remain, and let my
“ example in that respect deserve thy notice.
“ He does well, who acts right in his station;
“ but that I may not seem to despise thy pro-
“ mises or to neglect thy favour, know that in
“ this I rejoice, that in the hearing of thy people
“ thou hast called me father. My name is GEI-
“ RAI, I have no son to preserve that name, let
“ it be thine, and that of thy offspring, and
“ may the omnipotent bestow on thee, on them,
“ and this people perpetual blessings.” The
Khan most willingly accorded his petition, the
Mirzas renewed their acclamations, which were
presently echoed by all the people in the field,
and the old man departed to his own home as well
satisfied with the honour he had obtained, as the
young man with the dignity he possessed.

On the day of inauguration, a small square
carpet was spread in the midst of the court in
the sight of the princes and the people, which
carpet is reported to have served for the same
use, when Jengiz the famous conqueror was de-
clared supreme Khan of the Tartars, from whom
these princes pretend to descend in a direct line;
upon this carpet the young prince was seated,
and then four of the principal Mirzas taking
each a corner lifted him up and shewed him to
the people, the chief doctor of the law pro-
claiming aloud, *long live* Hadfi Geirai Khan of
the Kipzack Tartars! He was then invested with
the robe, the belt, and the dagger worn by his
ancestors, and thus the ceremony ended. This
monarch found the strength of his people too
much exhausted to regain all that they had lost,
but

but by his prudence and valour he preserved what remained, and left his nation far more potent at his decease, than he found them at his accession. He had eight sons living at the time of his demise, and of these the sixth was Mengli Geirai Khan, who conquered the country of Crimea by the assistance of the Turks, with whom he concluded a perpetual alliance, and consented to hold that sovereignty from the Porte on condition, that if the house of Ottoman failed, his family should be called to the succession of the Turkish empire, which has been considered since as the fundamental law of both states.

Of this Mengli Geirai Khan there is one passage recorded which is so extraordinary, and has such a connection with what I have been saying, that I will venture to trespass so far upon your patience as to mention it. The Mirzas became seditious again in his time, and their power was so great as to depose him, but by the interposition of the Ottomans he was restored. He dissimulated his resentment for some years, till after obtaining a great victory, a fair occasion offered for making, according to the Tartar custom, a general feasting, when having invited the Mirzas and their families, and making them drink to excess, he dismissed them; but having posted troops, on whom he could depend, in the several roads that led from his court, they were all cut off to a man, which is the reason, that tho' there are many of this dignity amongst other nations, there are among the Crim Tartars but very few, and those the descendants of such as through age, infirmities, or the great distance of the places of their residence happened not to be among the number of the guests at this bloody feast.

feast. Thus these unhappy Princes became the victims of their own policy, and having shewn the Khan by what methods they once thought it lawful to aggrandize themselves, he judged it expedient, for the safety of himself and of his successors, to take a step of the same kind. Of such dreadful consequence it is in all countries, for ambitious men to venture upon such barbarous practices to gratify the lust of power, which by setting an ill example, corrupt the minds of the succeeding generations, and frequently proves the occasion of bringing the like calamities upon their posterity, from an apprehension that they may tread in the paths of their ancestors, and commit the same cruelties again.

This is the true reason why the Khans of Crim Tartary, and all the princes of their house, which are very numerous, bear the surname of Geirai, of which frequent mention is made in the Turkish history; but the reason, so far as I remember not any where related. There is another remark to be made, that tho' the old shepherd himself left no son, yet there were other collateral branches of his family which still subsist in Tartary, and are distinguished from the royal house by the appellations of Choban Geirai, the first of these words signifying a shepherd, and even these are honoured as princes, and the Porte within this century elevated one of them to the dignity of Khan; but upon the application of the princes of the reigning house he was speedily deposed. I am sensible that some disputes may be raised about the chronology of this history, several of the eastern writers placing this event above a hundred years higher; I pretend not to have skill enough in these mat-

ters to decide with certainty, and it is fully sufficient to my purpose, if the matters of fact as I have stated them are really true.

We may from thence conclude upon just grounds, that good sense and good principles are not confined to this or that nation, within the bounds of this or that quarter of the globe, but are really diffused through the mass of mankind, and appear very often with great lustre where they are least of all expected. Some take an untoward, and an unaccountable pleasure in defaming and disfiguring human nature, as if some good end could be obtained by representing the whole, or at least the greater part of the species as bad at bottom, which if there be, it surpasses my sagacity to find out; for my own part, the contrary has been always my delight, and nothing rejoices me more than to find either in books or amongst men such singular and surprising instances of disinterested goodness. Who in his right senses prefers weeds to flowers, who would adorn his hall with the statues of monsters, or pique himself upon making a collection of frightful pictures? If these things are absurd and ridiculous, how is the other to be defended, or why should Tacitus, Machiavel, or Hobbs be applauded for representing their fellow creatures, as a race of self interested, wicked, and perfidious beings?

But I forget that I am speaking before ladies, and that perhaps they have long ago discovered my subject to be unsuitable and improper, at least in their presence. Old men have their odd humours, and there is a natural candour in the sex, upon which I must depend for my excuse. Besides, to say the truth, and to confess the real sentiments

sentiments of my soul, I think them the fairest judges of virtue; there is something so open, so generous, and so free from all suspicion in the minds of ladies well educated, and of true sense, that I have a peculiar confidence in their judgments, and am never so well satisfied with my own notions, as when they are so lucky as to meet with their sanction. It was, if I remember right, in this company that I once heard it lamented, that the same care was not usually employed in cultivating the understanding of the fair sex, that there is in forming and improving our own, which if the fact be really true, I concur in thinking a great misfortune. It is possible however, that the ladies themselves may have seen this in a wrong light, by which I mean, that they have not considered the difference of education as a thing absolutely necessary, but have ascribed to partiality, what upon second thoughts, perhaps, they will find is grounded upon more rational motives.

It is not at all impossible that you may suspect, I was determined to take up so much of your time from a natural bias in favour of the old Tartar, and indeed old people are commonly advocates for each other, which is the more excusable, because otherwise they might run the hazard of having no advocates at all. But supposing this the case, and that I might be the fonder of this relation for that particular circumstance; yet that surely does not render it less curious, less instructive, or less entertaining. We are always determined by some little latent circumstance or other in things of this nature, tho' very possibly we may be sometimes ignorant of them ourselves. This singularity in the humours

of particulars is of general benefit, since were it not for this many useful and pleasing truths would be hid from mankind ; variety of tastes is of benefit to the publick, and never more conspicuously so, than in things of this nature ; were it otherwise there would be such a sameness in our productions, as would infallibly render them disagreeable ; as it is, every one preferring his favourite scheme, endeavours to make it acceptable by all the decorations possible, and by the concurrence of such endeavours the publick in general meets with a multitude of amusements, and will always meet with them.

The concluding our entertainments with verse was left to every one's choice, and if I am still farther troublesome to you, it must be accounted a just punishment for the complaisance shewn upon a former occasion. Among other whims, which perhaps it were better I were without, the love of poetry is one, and I am never so well pleased, as when I see that divine art applied to adorn moral, sublime, and heroick sentiments. It is reported, that almost in all nations those who first endeavoured to recommend wisdom and virtue did it in verse, and from thence I presume it is, that a universal opinion has prevailed of the connection between prophecy and poesy, both being ascribed to a kind of inspiration. Without doubt this is in some measure countenanced by the many excellent things that we find in the writings of the poets, and on this account rather, than because they were written long ago. I am more especially pleased with the labours of those bards, who flourished when polite literature made its progress hither from Italy, which perhaps has made me sonder than I ought to be
of

of their manner, and incline me to give the preference to stanza's. By being long out of fashion, they are become a little unpleasant to modern ears, but notwithstanding this, they seem to have a peculiar propriety in respect to certain subjects. Perhaps, I have taken all this pains only to put it the more in your power to censure the defects in my performance. If this should be the case I shall not be the first, who, after shewing some degree of judgment in conceiving how things ought to be written to render them worth reading, has afterwards failed in the execution. Be that as it will here are my verses, and think of them and of my story together as you please, for such is my deference for your sentiments, that whatever your thoughts are they cannot fail of pleasing me.

I.

*On Norway's barren rocks the timber grows,
Which builds those vessels that to India sail;
For ev'ry land its proper blessing knows,
That may against its pinching wants avail:
Since nature, tho' sometimes mankind mistake,
And stile her step dame to her proper brood,
Doth with maternal care division make,
Bestowing upon each peculiar good,
So that each country look'd on as a whole,
Contains whatever may its wants suffice;
Or means which may that indigence controul,
If its inhabitants are brave and wise,
Yet seen as part of the divided ball,
Includes some excellence of use to all.*

II.

*But for this cause why should our fleets engage
 The various dangers of the winds and seas,
 Why brave of torrid climes the sultry rage,
 Or seek the shores that Arctic tempests freeze?
 Those eastern lands that spice and di'monds hold,
 So rich, so glorious, when compar'd with ours,
 Thanks to our merchants wise, and seamen bold,
 A lib'ral tribute in our island pours;
 We from the ports of ev'ry distant coast,
 A sample of their sev'ral goods obtain,
 And of whatever rarities they boast,
 We share as sovereigns of the liquid main.
 What place so plentuous as to feel no need,
 What soil so barren as no trade to feed?*

III.

*Hence may we judge mankind in order plac'd,
 And people fitly suited to their soil,
 In lands luxurious men with ease debas'd,
 In northern regions bodies apt for toil,
 To diff'rent ends by providence design'd,
 A diff'rent temper ev'ry people guides,
 By accidents, or clouded, or refin'd,
 This o'er their actions and their fate presides.
 Thus thro' the world if he progressive range,
 And various men, and various manners see,
 The true philosopher thinks nothing strange,
 Convinc'd that all things are as they should be,
 And nature constant to her gen'ral plan,
 Tho' changing climates, seasons, soil, and man,*

Lady

Lady Constantia was the first to return Sir Lawrence thanks for his discourse, which she did with greater emphasis, as she plainly perceived that his thoughts were a little ruffled, and his temper somewhat clouded by the spleen. She observed that what he had delivered was indeed entirely new, that it brought to their contemplation a multitude of things which they had never before considered, and that amidst the general satisfaction, she had observed with no small delight, that the story gave peculiar pleasure to Beaumont, whose eyes sufficiently spoke how much he was pleased with the Khan's gratitude towards his protector, and with the disinterested fidelity of the good old man, in spite of his narrow circumstances. I perceived, Madam, said Mr. Anguish the very same thing, and it put me in mind of the transports with which this story would have been received by a Spanish audience. There is no nation in the world more thoroughly possessed than they with romantick loyalty, and yet they are very far from approving every thing that is done at court, but they carefully distinguish between the monarch and his ministers. In this I have sometimes thought they go a little too far, since every act of grace, every right measure, every step taken for the publick good is ascribed to the king, and all the affection and respect arising from thence directed to the royal person; whereas, whatever is harsh, whatever has the least mixture of severity, or is in any degree unpopular, they attribute to the ministers. Let the king live, and let the evil administration perish! is the constant language of Spanish malecontents. It is really pleasant to hear them descant upon their grievances at

the same time that they are ingenious in the invention of numberless excuses in favour of the royal character. The king, say they, is a man, and in the government of his extensive dominions, he sees with other eyes, and hears with other ears than his own, he is just, he is merciful, he is beneficent in himself, but things are misrepresented, and we are the victims of those misrepresentations ; and thus whatever calamities they feel, the throne is never in the least danger, and the giving up a single minister, will at any time silence the murmurs of the people, and turn their clamours into applause.

Our sex, said Olivia, are very much obliged to Sir Lawrence, he is very desirous that our understandings should be improved, and thinks there is no kind of useful knowledge, from which, merely as women, we ought to be debarred. If the rest of the world thought like him, there is no doubt that it would have a very good effect, conversation in general would be much more entertaining and instructive, than it is commonly found. We should not hear it insinuated every day, that the company of ladies, except to their particular admirers, is tasteless and insipid. The bloom of beauty, the frail and fading empire of exterior charms, and a pert pretension to wit, would not be the utmost limits of female dominion. Gentlemen might then be able to stay at home without feeling it a confinement, and meet in their own families with such a flow of pertinent discourse as would take away the necessity of going abroad merely for amusement. The younger part of our sex would be esteemed rational as well as pretty creatures,

creatures, and when they cease to be young, passion and respect would not cease together. As far as I can observe, that young lady has been as attentive as any of us, and I dare say has been as well entertained, so that I am fully persuaded, that the notions which men entertain of being able to divert the ladies only with flattery and raillery, are very indifferently founded, and that if they would sometimes take the pains of being more conversible themselves, they would find sense as well relished as sounds, and that we are by nature capable of using words somewhat more to the purpose than parrots.

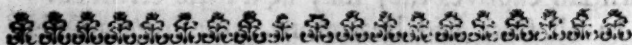
I can scarce think, returned Mr. Pensive, that any but brutes and fools ever doubted that women were as capable of conversation as men, for my own part, I am of quite a different opinion, I think there is nothing in which the sex excel so much as in speaking, and am thoroughly satisfied, that fewer hearts are won by beauty than by discourse. It is for this reason that I admire, Sir Lawrence did not say something in praise of the Tartar ladies, with whom, when not employed in war, their husbands pass so great a part of their time, and yet I cannot help believing, but the conversations in our western countries are more animated, and more agreeable than in the east, where the women being in a constant state of confinement, must of necessity know less of the world, and have their faculties more restrained than with us. We commonly observe in travelling thorough France and Germany more especially, that the ladies speak more correctly, and with far greater facility than the men even of equal rank, so that conversing with them is found the shortest and most

agreeable way of learning the language. But in countries where it is easier to see a man's treasure than his wife, and where the most amiable part of the family live in a state of captivity as well as subjection, there can scarce be any thing to invite a stranger to aim at any acquaintance with their tongues, which for any thing I know may be the principal reason, why the oriental learning is at so low an ebb in most parts of Europe.

Very possibly it may, added Henrietta, and I can assure you that I am very sorry for it. You must know that I read no books with so much satisfaction as those that treat of the east, and my good friend Mr. Beaumont spent a whole summer in teaching me geography enough to read such pieces with pleasure. I must however confess, that almost all that Sir Lawrence has told us was entirely new to me, since wherever I have met with any thing about Tartars, they are represented as hideously ugly in their persons, and outrageously barbarous in their manners. The manner in which, however Sir Lawrence has represented them, if it does not entirely banish those notions, qualifies them in a high degree, and has absolutely convinced me that at least some amongst them may have a very true relish for life, and pass their days agreeably enough in the alternate seasons of war and peace ; insomuch that I am not quite sure, that their women are so absolutely excluded from the pleasures of conversation as in other eastern countries, for it seems highly probable, that amongst so free and active a people, the ladies must come in for some share of liberty, nor is


it impossible, that by their intercourse with their christian captives they may be a little civilized.

In all this, said Beaumont, you have guessed extremely right, which is a sufficient indication, that if the faculties of female minds were as much exercised in their youth as those of the other sex, they would be at least as much improved. We are equally obliged to Sir Lawrence, for the judicious observations that introduced, and for those rational remarks that have attended this story, as for the story itself, which is singular, striking and instructive. The more simple and unperplexed the manners of any people are, the sooner any extraordinary cause operates upon them; whereas in countries more civilized, where passions are intermixed, and interests exceedingly complicated, both mischiefs and remedies work more slowly, so that governments are not so easily overturned, and when overturned are a long time before they can be established again upon a solid foundation. When Mr. Beaumont had done speaking, Sir Lawrence again thanked the company for the many civilities he had received, and Madam, said he, turning to lady Constantia, to shew my gratitude as far as I am able, I must intreat you to make them amends to morrow night for the defects of my relation.



FEMALE ARROGANCE ;
OR, THE
FATAL INCLINATION.

A French History founded in Facts.

HAT I propose, my friends, said lady Constantia, for the amusement of this evening, is a relation, which once occupied the thoughts of a gentleman of great merit, in that country where the scene is laid, and who, substituting feigned names, that he might not seem to take a pleasure in circulating a story disagreeable, if not dishonourable to a noble family, delivered things which he knew to be truth, in so easy and so instructive a manner, that if I could copy it with the same fidelity, that I remember all the material points of his narrative, I should not doubt in the least of giving you ample satisfaction. As it is, my intention must atone for any defects in the performance, which being involuntary in me, I am convinced you will have the goodness to excuse, and therefore without troubling you with a tedious apology, I will enter upon the work at once.

In a certain province of France, about the middle of the last century, there was a mechanic, who amongst other children, had a daughter named Margaret, wonderfully beautiful, but not at all distinguished, either by the poignancy of her wit, or the solidity of her judgment; her parents however, had a strong opinion, that her charms would procure her an advantageous settlement, and this notion, which certainly contributed not a little to make the girl vain, was supported by the humour of their neighbours; who instead of her proper name, commonly called her, Margaret the fair. Yet with all this eclat of her beauty, fortune was far from seconding her wishes; so that she was turned of twenty five, and still unmarried. She might in that time have lovers of superior quality, but whether it proceeded from principle or pride, she maintained her character unspotted, and would not avail herself of her blooming beauty at the expence of her virtue. If her conduct had been in other respects as regular, she had left a very different reputation, or perhaps, her name had been buried in oblivion; and except her own townsfolk, nobody had taken notice of Margaret the fair, much less transmitted her adventures to posterity.

At length, an honest carpenter in the town, called James Gourlay, made his addreses to this beauty, and at the persuasion of her family, who were tired with waiting, till some Baron, Count, or Marquis, should be captivated with her charms, she married him. But tho' the poor man loved her sincerely, worked hard to maintain her, and made it the study of his life to please her, yet Margaret the fair could not endure him; for

no

no other reason in the world, than because he was a carpenter. She was not contented to treat him, as if he had been a person vastly beneath her, but used him in public and in private with so much contempt and scorn, that the poor fellow grew tired of his life; and if Margaret regretted every day that she had stooped to marry a carpenter, James Gourlay repented every hour, that he had sacrificed all title to quiet, by espousing a beauty. At this rate, things went on for some months, till the good man's patience being entirely wore out, one summer's morning, he rose with the sun, and with no other provision than a bag of tools at his back, left his fine lady to make the melancholy trial, of what indigent charms would do against the frowns of fortune.

When two or three weeks had passed, without hearing any news of her husband, and when the voice of the public told her, without much ceremony, that through her arrogance and folly, an honest man had been driven out of his country, she quitted her house, and retired to a private lodging, where she lived in as mean a manner, as words can describe. She thought it beneath a beauty to work, and besides, she had nothing of industry in her nature; she could however live hard, and was extremely cautious not to keep any company, or take any step, that might be detrimental to her character. This circumstance, which in itself was very commendable, after more than a year spent in this disconsolate way, recommended her to the charity of a woman of quality, who from a generous desire of protecting distressed virtue, bestowed upon her a competent subsistence, which

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in a short time recovered her from that languid condition, into which abstinence and disquiet had reduced her; and at the same time restored that haughty temper, and high opinion of herself, which had been the only source of her misfortunes, and which, if any thing could have done it, might have taught her humility.

As she now made a tolerable figure, and lost no opportunity of shewing herself in public places, a gentleman of a good family, and who possessed a very lucrative employment, cast his eyes upon her, and became quickly enamoured, to such a degree, that he could not be easy without her. The proposals he made her were not very honourable, but yet such, as he thought might have tempted a person in her situation; but Margaret rejected them with disdain, and Mr. Grangeot, finding it impossible to seduce, at length determined to marry her. Margaret was extremely pleased with this, but told him plainly, the thing was impossible; that she had a husband living, for any thing that she knew, and there was no remedy but staying the time prescribed by the law, within which, if he did not return, she might without danger, give her hand to another. Her lover however impatient, received this declaration calmly enough, and assured her, that he was disposed to wait with patience, the opportunity he so much desired, of making her his wife.

But some months after, at his return from a journey to Paris, when three years had elapsed since she had seen her husband, he came to make her a visit, with an air of joy in his countenance, and produced to her the certificate of a colonel of a regiment, that her husband died
the

the latter end of the year before, in the hospital of Lisle. Margaret was not very thoroughly satisfied with this certificate, but however, as she knew nothing to the contrary of its being true, she made no scruple of acting, as if it was so ; declared publickly the death of her husband, went into deep mourning, in which having continued for a decent time, she condescended to a second marriage, believing that she had now found that fortune she had so long sought, and that in the end, she had met with a prize worthy of her beauty.

Her espousals were celebrated with a magnificence becoming the person who had made her his wife, and though his family were by no means pleased with so strange a choice, yet as Mr. Grangeot was above forty, and master of a very plentiful fortune, they held it prudent to be silent, and even to pay all the respect that was due to the new married lady. This sudden turn of her condition, served only to shew in a more disadvantageous light, those ill qualities, which had been hitherto buried in obscurity. Madam Grangeot, though equally destitute of birth and breeding, was excessively jealous of her rank, and expected from her servants, and from all who approached her, a degree of homage, that would have been but unwillingly paid, even to a duchess. Her pride however was far from being her only failing ; she was vain, peevish, and ill natured ; delighted in scandal, and secret history ; took no manner of notice of her relations, and thought, that being now mistress of what the world so much admires, a fine house, and a splendid equipage, she need be under no restraint, and had not the least reason to trouble herself,

herself, with what the vulgar thought proper to say of her conduct.

A life of indolence and indulgence made her grow fat, more especially after she had brought into the world a daughter, who was the only child she ever had; yet how much soever her charms might be faded, in the general opinion of unconcerned spectators, her husband continued to love her, not only with undiminished affection, but to a degree of dotage; while she, on the other hand, treated him, if not with the contempt, which she had shewed to her first spouse, yet with an air of superiority, that no way became her, and which nothing but his excessive fondness could have made him endure with patience. The world looked upon him indeed, as a person of no great capacity, and not qualified, either by the endowments of nature, or the lights derived from education, to make an extraordinary figure; but at the same time, nobody denied him the character of a plain, hospitable, good-natured man, and one who discharged the duties of his function with great punctuality. His wife, who was far from being possessed of talents at all superior to his own, governed him intirely; and it was purely in complaisance to her, that he lived with great splendour, and entertained a vast resort of company, who in return spoke but slightly of him, and made his lady the subject of their ridicule.

The name of their daughter was *Hermione*; and as no pains were spared in her education, she discovered, as she grew up, a beauty, not at all inferior to her mother's, and an understanding, incomparably better than that of either of her parents. At the age of fourteen, she was considered as

the most amiable person in the province, notwithstanding there was a visible haughtiness in her behaviour, and she seemed to value herself too much, on being regarded as a very rich heiress. Mr. Grangeot loved her tenderly, and was continually praising every thing she did ; her mother was excessively proud of having so fine a daughter, and took all the pains she could, to flatter and heighten the only foible the young lady had. The fame of Hermione's beauty and wealth drew many young noblemen to the father's house, where they were received by him with great civility, and with as much as the nature of madam Grangeot would allow her to shew, provided they could dissemble so far, as to behave towards her, with all that deference and submission which she expected. But notwithstanding, some of these young persons were, in point of fortune as well as family, superior to the blooming object of their wishes ; yet Mr. Grangeot did not shew any inclination of disposing of his daughter, and the mother only encouraged their visits, in hopes of spreading the fame of Hermione, and thereby attracting some duke, or prince, to run the hazard of falling by her eyes. So little impression had the distresses of the earlier part of her life made on this woman's mind, and so strong continued her prejudice in favour of beauty, notwithstanding the lesson read her by the proper mistress of such kind of people, Experience, on the folly of trusting for permanent happiness, to so very transient an advantage.

The true design of Hermione's father, was to marry this lovely heiress, to the count de Belcœur, the son of his nearest relation ; and who
would

would have been his heir, in case he had not had children. There was only a year's difference in the age of the young people, and with a view to this marriage, they had been bred up pretty much together, which had the effect their fathers designed, in respect to the count, who was passionately fond of Hermione, even before he had any distinct sense of what passion was, which such as are acquainted with the dispositions of young people, will very easily believe. In reference to Hermione, the case had certainly been the same, and the perpetual assiduities of a lover always near her, must have touched a heart naturally tender, if her mother had not constantly interposed, and laboured with the same diligence, to instil into her daughter, a spirit of coquetry, that in justice to that young lady, and to herself, she should have made it her business to remove, if that had been Hermione's defect by nature. Thus, as it too frequently happens, the very person, whom affection and interest ought to have made the guardian of her peace, was precisely the authoress of what ruined her quiet, and threw, or rather dragged her into the road of inevitable misfortunes.

This young count, the cousin and the lover of Hermione, was not remarkably handsome in his person, neither had he in his air much of the man of quality; but to make amends for this, his disposition was gentle, his temper mild and regular, and his heart perfectly honest and sincere. In short, under a plain and unpromising appearance, he concealed both amiable and great qualities, and though he could not be stiled a beau, or a fine gentleman, he was, without controversy, a young man of as much candour,
honour,

honour, and uprightness of mind, as his country had to boast. All this Mr. Grangeot very well knew, and indeed it was the general voice of all his acquaintance, and of every body, who had an opportunity of considering his behaviour, and looking into his conduct. Reasons which independent of those motives arising from family interests, ought to have rendered madam Grangeot extremely desirous of having him for her son-in-law, as well for her own sake as for the sake of her daughter, which notwithstanding, she either did not consider, or else flattered herself with a foolish opinion, that they ought not to stand in competition with the superlative merit of Hermione, that must unquestionably procure her a better match.

It was however believed, by such as were well acquainted with the family, that there was a concealed reason, which prompted the old lady to have an aversion for this deserving youth. His father, the marquis de Belcoeur, had sometimes taken the liberty of speaking freely to her, upon some of those enormous mistakes, which she was every day committing ; and when he found that this had no manner of effect, he would sometimes vindicate her husband, by laying errors at the right door, and by representing him, as a man too much under the dominion of his wife. Such a conduct naturally raised the resentment of a vain and violent woman ; and as her sense was not strong, and her principles far from being steady, she knew not what it was to forgive. Yet the young count had never offended in either of these particulars, his affection for Hermione made him behave with the utmost submission to her mother ; and his youth

youth delivered him from the chagrin, of being obliged to enter into discourses on such delicate subjects. However, as madam Grangeot knew no way of being revenged upon the father, but by crossing the marriage of the son, she left no means untried to render him first indifferent, and then disagreeable to her daughter, in which she had but too much success.

All this however was carried on with very deep dissimulation, more especially on the part of the mother ; who knowing that her husband valued the marquis beyond any man in the world, and loved the count as much, as if he had been his own son, she was unwilling to discover her sentiments, and therefore, the latter had always free access, and was treated by madam Grangeot, and Hermione, with much civility and decency, though not with that regard and respect, which he deserved. By this hypocrisy, the peace of the family was in a great measure maintained, and the good man, her husband, had not the least suspicion, that the sentiments of his wife and daughter were the reverse of his own.

In this situation things continued for several years, during which space, all parties acted in such a manner, as to deceive each other, and to deceive themselves. Hermione rejected all the offers that were made her, because none of them had any correspondence with her inclination. Her father was not displeased with this, because it concurred with his design ; he was desirous that his own choice might appear the effects of preference for his relation, and not of necessity ; her mother was satisfied, because however advantageous some of them might be, they were very far from coming up to her expectations.

The

The marquis, as his son was gone to make the tour of Italy, attributed the young lady's indifference to her prepossession in his favour, and the count, misled by his father's letters, was happy in the way that many people are happy, from the firm belief of a mistake. In the midst however of this whimsical scene, the young lady's years increased, and the lustre of her beauty was at its full height, so that her mother and herself began to think, there was no room left for trifling, and would have been exceedingly well pleased, if fortune had thought proper to introduce the prince or duke she had destined for Hermione; yet fortune being blind, could not, it seems, so readily stumble upon this personage.

But in the affairs of families, as in those of kingdoms, great revolutions commonly happen when they are least expected. The business of his office called Mr. Grangeot to Paris, where he caught a fever; of which, though he recovered in appearance, yet either from the fault of the physician, or his own in returning too hastily into the country, he was surprised by a defluxion of humours on the breast, that very quickly brought him into a condition, from which he was not to be retrieved by physic. In this melancholy situation he began to have very serious thoughts, of the condition in which he was to leave his widow and his daughter. He had something that lay heavy at his heart, and therefore the morning before he died, having directed that every body should leave his chamber, except his wife, he desired her to place herself by the bedside, and recollecting himself as well as he was able, he addressed her in these words:

" You

“ You see me, madam, very near my end,
“ and what gives me the utmost concern, when
“ that period comes, I am by no means certain
“ that I shall leave you a widow. It was on the
“ testimony of one hundred pistoles, that I ob-
“ tained that certificate, which made way for
“ our marriage. That my love for you prompt-
“ ed me to this method, is what you cannot
“ doubt, since in the course of so many years,
“ it has been the principal occupation of my
“ life, to give you repeated marks of my af-
“ fection. This, madam, has been hitherto an
“ effectual support, against all the envious ef-
“ forts of a malicious world. All that I can
“ now do for you, or for my dearest Hermione,
“ is to point out as effectual a support when I
“ shall be no more, and the only consolation I
“ have in that sad state, in which you see me,
“ is the strong persuasion I have, that such a
“ one I can point out, if you have but prudence
“ and moderation enough to follow my advice.
“ My cousin, the count, has given innumerable
“ proofs of the zeal and sincerity of his passion
“ for our daughter. I am not ignorant of your
“ distaste to his father, but I know no just
“ cause, why either yourself, or Hermione,
“ should dislike the son. Be prudent therefore,
“ and conclude, as speedily as you can, a match
“ between the young people ; the marquiss
“ thinks it his interest, and certainly it is your’s.
“ Hermione can hardly find a better, can never
“ find so proper a husband ; let her then marry
“ the count, if you pay any respect to my me-
“ mory, or have any regard for her happiness
“ — I can say no more.”

As

As he pronounced these last words, he fell into a violent agony, from which, when he was recovered in some measure, he called for his daughter, intending to have exhorted her in like manner, but his strength was too far spent, so that he could only give her his blessing, and then relapsed into another fit, which ended with his life. Those who were about his bed, withdrew the young lady, to prevent her being terrified by a sight so affecting, and carried her to her mother's apartment, where she found her much discomposed ; the last words of her husband, having made a very sensible impression upon her mind ; and happy had it been for herself and Hermione, if that impression had never worn out. But there are some people who act, as if they were under a fatality of taking every step that may contribute to their own ruin, in spite of all the warnings and admonitions that can be given them.

Immediately after her husband's decease, the marquis de Belcoeur, came to offer all the services within the compass of his power, to the disconsolate ladies, who treated him with all the marks of deference and respect possible. He performed with strict punctuality the promises which he had made, with great warmth ; put them in full possession of the estate and effects of his deceased relation, and by his countenance and protection, maintained them in that superior sphere of life, in which they had shone so long, and from which however, they would have infallibly fallen, if it had not been for the marquis's kind attention, who generously overlooked whatever was passed, and behaved towards them on all occasions as a sincere friend. The ladies were very sensible of all this, and testified their
gratitude

gratitude in a very obliging manner, more especially madam Grangeot, who understood better than her daughter, the great importance of his friendship.

When the count returned from Italy, he was very impatient to see his mistress, and prepossessed by the notions, which his father had given him, he was not a little surprised, at the cold civility with which he was received. The marquis endeavoured to persuade him, that Hermione was still melancholy for the loss of her father, and that in decency, she could not behave otherwise than she had done; but lovers have extraordinary penetration, and the count clearly discerned, that whatever the cause might be of Hermione's declining so many advantageous offers, his pretensions had little or no share therein. He continued nevertheless his assiduities, and began to entertain some hopes, from the visible alteration in madam Grangeot's conduct, who seemed much better disposed towards his interest than she had formerly been. This however, was the pure effects of cunning, and the design she had formed of playing a back game, by giving her daughter to the count, in case the duke or prince she expected, should not in due time appear. Hermione, whose views were not altogether so ambitious, was resolved to please herself; and as she had no liking to the count, so she took very little pains to disguise it, and would not enter into the politics of her mother at all.

The marquis de Belcoeur was unwilling to precipitate things, but perceiving that they did not take a favourable turn, and beginning to suspect that his son had formed a better judgment

than himself, he resolved to clear up the matter, by demanding an explanation from madam Grangeot, of her real intentions as to the marriage. He conducted this affair with all the decorum possible ; he represented to her, that it was high time Hermione and the count should be settled in the world ; that he was very well apprised of his deceased relation's intentions, of which he would not have put her in mind, but that he thought it for their mutual interests, an affair of such importance to both families, should not be drawn into greater length. Madam Grangeot excused herself, on her daughter's not discovering any great willingness to enter into the marriage state ; spoke very civilly of the count, and affected, as far as her parts would give her leave, to behave with much circumspection and address. The marquiss easily saw through all this, and therefore closed the conversation, by telling her roundly, that he acted the part of an advocate for a young lover, rather than that of a cautious father ; that as his son had fixed his hopes of happiness, in the possession of Hermione ; he was for his sake anxious that the marriage should be no longer delayed, and that therefore he desired she would, in a few days, let him have her definitive resolution.

When the old lady came to apply herself to Hermione upon this delicate subject, and to insinuate to her, that it might be inconvenient to undeceive the father and the son, as to the true state of their inclinations, in respect to the match, she found for the first time, that she was absolutely the dupe of her own arts ; the young lady answering with great firmness, that she had no intention to marry the count, and as little to

dissemble

dissemble with his father; that as she was so happy as to be mistress of an independent fortune, she thought she had a right to be as independent in her choice; and that, as her circumstances put her under no obligation of marrying for convenience; she had nothing in her temper, that could induce her to deceive those, who in a matter of that nature, might consult their interests, as well as their inclinations. The mother was struck dumb with this speech; her daughter's sense and spirit were equally displeasing; however, she made no reply, but retired under visible confusion to her own apartment. There, after some consultation, it came into her head to make a journey to Lyons, and that so suddenly and secretly, as to prevent the marquis or his son from demanding an answer before their departure, which, after this conference, she was unwilling to give.

It is not at all surprising, that while her daughter was very young, madam Grangeot should be unwilling to communicate to her the history of her own adventures; but when she was grown up, and appeared to have as much good sense as most young women of her age, it would certainly have been a point of prudence, to have let her into a secret, that must infallibly have abated the haughtiness of her spirit, as well as given her true and just notions of the obligations they were under to the marquis, and the very great expediency of preferring the count to any other man. It would have been also a point of discretion, to have made thoroughly known to her daughter, the sentiments of her father upon his death bed, which however the old lady cautiously concealed, and would willingly have

forgot, but they ran continually in her head, and yet did not hinder her from falling precisely into those miseries and mischiefs ; the foresight of which, so much terrified that poor gentleman in his last moments. Instead of these wise and salutary measures, this of a journey was taken up and pursued, much to the satisfaction of the young lady, as well as the old ; for they both thought they were flying from difficulties and dangers, when, in truth, they were running into them ; though even after all this folly and imprudence, they might have made a retreat, if it had been possible, for such wrong-heads ever to form just conceptions, or to have the courage to execute them, when formed and proposed by others for their advantage.

Upon their arrival at Lyons, the ladies, as they were now out of mourning, set up a fine equipage, and made a very splendid figure ; appeared in all public places, and endeavoured to be introduced to the best companies ; but notwithstanding her pride and affectation of grandeur, notwithstanding that she had been so long in the possession of a good fortune ; and notwithstanding the many years, in which she might have improved herself, there was something so uncouth in the manners, so ungenteel in the behaviour, and so mean in the language of the old lady, that all the respect she received, proceeded from her being the mother of a young and beautiful heiress, which was far however from procuring her access into all the places into which she desired to come. Yet as shew and equipage will do much, and the reputation of wealth still more, so there were families enough ready to receive them with open arms, and to
give

give them all the demonstrations of zeal and regard, that they could possibly desire. This was alike pleasing both to mother and daughter, and they were perfectly well satisfied with the success of their project, and still more so, when the young lady had a lover to her mind.

This new pretender to Hermione's favour was the chevalier de Trillac, a younger brother of a very good family, and who had some fortune. He was, what is generally stiled, a man of the world; his person genteel, his dress gay, but not to a degree of being ridiculous; his behaviour perfectly gallant; his conversation lively and agreeable, and his eloquence such, as neither of our fair ladies could resist. But under these fair appearances, some very foul qualities lay hid; he was debauched, had a strong passion for play, self-interested, void of principles, and one, who had long before stifled all sense of shame. He was prodigiously taken with the person of Hermione, and was mighty well pleased, when he understood, that this fair lady was likewise very rich: he made his addresses with so much fire and spirit; pursued them with such ardour, and took such incredible pains to get the old lady on his side, that in a very short time things were brought near a conclusion, and Hermione being sincerely in love with him, never had the least suspicion, that his passion was less warm, or less disinterested than her own. This sunshine however, in which all parties rejoiced, was very quickly obscured.

One afternoon, when madam Grangeot was retired to her own apartment, and Hermione employed in giving directions for a grand supper, to which the chevalier was invited, there came

an old man, very shabbily dressed to the door, who was rudely importunate to speak to madam Grangeot, to whom, he said, he had something of the utmost consequence to communicate. That lady being informed of this, and hearing that the man was not disposed to take any denial, ordered her woman to bring him in, and as soon as the woman was withdrawn, she asked him with an air of disdain, who he was, and why he made such a noise? It is true, said the old man, surlily, that you are twice as big, and not half so handsome as you were, and yet I know you very well, so that I think it strange you do not recollect James Gourlay, who after being upwards of twenty years a slave in Turkey, has been lucky enough to return to France, and expects to share in your undeserved good fortune. His voice and his looks struck the great lady like a clap of thunder. She could not help recollecting the features of her husband; but as she was accustomed to take every thing by the wrong end, so she foolishly and fatally resolved to brazen it out.

After shrieking therefore, as loud as she could, she pretended to fall into a fit, which brought her daughter and most of her servants about her. She then thought proper to come to herself, and desired they would turn that impudent old rascal out of the house; which notwithstanding all he said and did to prevent it, was quickly done; she had the assurance afterwards to complain to her intended son-in-law of this outrageous insult, as she was pleased to call it, affirming, in the most solemn manner, that she had never seen the old fellow's face before. Her daughter thoroughly believed it; but the chevalier, who had taken care to be better acquainted with

with her history, had not quite so much faith. He swore however, that he was thoroughly satisfied of the truth of what her ladyship said, and promised to have the old man severely chastised, in which he was as good as his word; for having found him out, he handled him so roughly, that he was glad to quit the city, and leave them all for a short time in peace.

But after working up and down the country for some weeks, he happened to stroll to the house of a farmer, who had been the marquis of Belcoeur's servant, and was then his tenant. He heard his tale very patiently; supplied him with a little money, and sent his son with him to his landlord. The marquis listened with attention to his story; remarked the circumstances of it very carefully, and perceiving there was nothing in it that had the appearance of falshood, and that the old man was not of a genius, capable of inventing such a relation, he ordered him a competent subsistence, and after mature deliberation, instituted a process in his name before the parliament of the province; which gave the ladies at Lyons no small disturbance, and furnished the chevalier with an excuse for putting off the marriage. He continued however, to pay all the submission imaginable to the mother, and persisted in his tender sentiments for the daughter; but as for the nuptials, they were to attend the event of the suit.

As Hermione was very anxious to have this strange affair over, and as she had not the least doubt of its ending to their wishes, she obliged her mother's lawyers to facilitate the hearing as much as possible, and this, notwithstanding some persons who had much kindness and compassion for

her, gave her secret intimation, that delay was much more her interest than dispatch, to which also her mother was inclined. But the chevalier being entirely in his mistress's sentiments, having embarked his friends and family in their interest, from a persuasion, that where money was not wanting there could want nothing to make a cause good ; this was vehemently hurried on, more especially as the advocates on the other side were equally active and alert, from an apprehension, that if the old man should die during the suit, they might be infinitely more perplexed than they were. In the space of a few months therefore, the process was finished, and a day fixed for the hearing to come on.

From the time this affair was first in agitation, the count perpetually interceded with his father, to hearken to some accommodation and not to expose a person, for whom he had so tender regard, to the contempt of a censorious world, by the loss at once both of her rank and fortune. He the rather implored this pity in favour of his cousin, because himself was to be the only gainer by her misfortune, which was a circumstance, so far from consoling, that it went to his very heart. Besides, he put his father in mind, that how just soever their pretensions might be, envious tongues would be apt to say, that he had sought his cousin's person for the sake of her estate ; and that being disappointed in his amorous pretensions to one, he had by a legal prosecution, possessed himself of the other, and left his mistress miserable, because he could not make her his wife. The marquis for the first time, treated his son with some degree of harshness and resentment. " You
" are

“ are a young man, count, said he ; I have hitherto considered you in that light, and have done all you could ask, and much more than you could expect, to gratify your wishes. I should not have taken this step, if I had listened to those, who suggested, that I bartered the honour of our family, for the wealth of your cousin. Do you think, that I shall pay any more regard to your amorous lamentations, when to comply with them, I must violate the rules of justice? Do I seek any thing more? Did I hunt out this unfortunate man? Did I stir up this prosecution? Far from it; providence in its own fit time produced this James Gourlay, and led him to seek my protection. The voice of the world can give me no concern, while my actions are approved by my own conscience. Degenerate boy, dost thou think to hide that whining effeminate passion, under the specious colour of flying from public reproach? Banish such notions from thy breast, and know, that love and pity, and thy false notions of fame, ought always to be sacrificed not to interest but to justice. This man, old and poor as he is, has a right to that as well as we, and it is the highest honour to vindicate distressed innocence. That infamous old woman, with all her guilt upon her head, makes no propositions; on the contrary, she charges us with supporting an impostor. Shall we then take guilt upon ourselves, by making overtures to her; shall we give up a poor wretch, who has thrown himself upon our charity? Is this the way to stifle murmurs, or to gain the voice of the public? No surely. Let us

“do what is fit to be done, and when we have procured him justice, we may without any imputation, listen to the suggestions of pity.”

As this was a cause of great expectation, there was a prodigious resort of persons of distinction to the hearing before the parliament, which lasted eight whole days. The advocates on both sides exerted their learning and their eloquence; the judges heard every thing with the utmost patience and impartiality. The beauty and modesty of Hermione, who came every day, attended by the chevalier and his relations, exceedingly moved their compassion; the old woman very prudently kept out of sight; the count came likewise to the audience every day in his coach, with all the friends of his family, but the marquis entered the hall on foot, walking by the side of the old man, who was dressed in the same ragged garment, that he had worn at Lyons. After going through the whole evidence, from whence it manifestly appeared, that the certificate was false, forged and obtained by bribery; that every particular of the old man's story was supported by indubitable testimonies, and the identity of his person, and the validity of his marriage clearly demonstrated by living witnesses, the parliament proceeded to judgment.

The substance of their arret was, that the marriage of Mr. Grangeot was null and void; that his daughter was illegitimate; that all his estates were to descend, as if there had been no such marriage; that Margaret Gourlay should return to her husband, under the severest penalties; and then added a clause in favour of Hermione;

mione; by which she had ten thousand livres given for her subsistence.

This judgment being pronounced, the chevalier conducted the young lady back to her mother's house, with the few friends that had not yet deserted her. Such a scene of distress was hardly ever known; the mother sat without speaking, looking sometimes wild, and sometimes stupid; the daughter wept, and the chevalier appeared no less afflicted; all who were present, expressed in the strongest terms their sorrow and concern. In the midst of this grief, Hermione addressing herself to the chevalier, told him, that the loss of her rank and fortune, afflicted her infinitely less, than the thoughts of having plunged him into such a gulph of trouble and discredit; and that it wounded her to the soul, when she reflected on the reproaches, a man of his quality must bear, who espoused a person in such circumstances as her's. The chevalier, with a low obeysance answered, that her innocence was as conspicuous as her misfortunes, and that men of quality knew how to avoid reproach, by despising it. He made her two visits after this, and was then absent for three days, which induced Hermione to write him a passionate letter, and to this the answer was, that he had been indisposed, and that if he found himself better, he would wait upon her the next day; which affected Hermione with infinite concern, and gave her mother great suspicions. He came according to his promise, excused his absence very faintly, spoke but little, and stayed only a short time.

The old lady took notice of this, as an additional misfortune; but Hermione excused her

lover, imputed his languor to his indisposition, which, she said, gave her more pain than any thing else, and the rather, because she was afraid it would deprive her of his company, the only satisfaction she had still left ; blaming herself for having made him quit his apartment too soon, as appeared from that weakness, which hindered his continuing with her. The mother, however, had very different notions, and thought she discovered in the confusion of his looks, an uneasiness at being where he was ; and which appeared to her a certain prognostic, that they were not like to receive another visit from him in haste. Indeed their company grew thinner every day, for people are not apt to come, where misfortune is known to reside, through fear perhaps, that the malady may be contagious ; and if curiosity brings them once, compassion is seldom so strong as to draw them a second time. In short, if retirement be acceptable to those in distress, it is the only comfort of which the world is not inclined to deprive them.

When therefore the next morning, her mother went to Hermione's apartment, she found her alone, and very disconsolate, one of her servants having told her, that he saw the chevalier in his coach in another part of the town. The mother said all she could to comfort her, and began to discourse of what was fit for them to do, while something was still in their power, the marquis as yet, having taken no step whatever to disturb them. While they were talking very seriously, they heard a coach stop at the door, a great bustle among the servants, which revived Hermione a little, who took it for granted, that it was the chevalier come to pay her a visit.

visit. But their surprise was very great, when instead of the chevalier, they saw the count de Belcoeur enter their apartment, richly dressed, and with an air of gaiety in his countenance. He paid his respects to them both, with the same civility and submission, which he was accustomed to do, in the days of their better fortune. They rose and received him, with great marks of deference, and then desired him to be seated. After a few compliments and enquiries had passed in relation to the health of the ladies, the count threw himself upon his knees before Hermione, who thereupon appeared in great disorder, which did not hinder the old woman, from shewing visible signs of satisfaction. The young lady obliged him to rise, and at the same time rose herself; upon which the count addressed her in these words.

“ I come, madam, not to insult your mis-
“ fortunes, but first to purge myself from hav-
“ ing any concern in them whatever, and next
“ to put an end to them. I laboured all I could
“ with my father, to prevent this fatal process,
“ but my intreaties were to no purpose, and all
“ the hopes I had, was from distant hints, that
“ he had no intention to reduce you to extre-
“ mities. I ventured yesterday to intimate my
“ sentiments, that I might be acquainted with
“ his, and it is impossible for me to express my
“ joy, when I found them exactly conformable
“ to my own. I come therefore, madam, to
“ restore you all that the parliament has taken
“ from you. My father consents, that I shall
“ marry you, that a suitable provision shall be
“ made for your mother, and that such care
“ shall be taken of the person, who created
“ this

“ this disturbance, as that he may pass the rest
“ of his days in quiet, and trouble neither of
“ you any more. Say Hermione, say, we are
“ to be happy, upon these terms, that the peace
“ of our families shall be again restored, and
“ your mother delivered from the terrors of
“ that sentence, which since it passed, she has
“ not deplored more than I, and which from
“ this moment may be buried in oblivion.”
“ My lord, replied Hermione, with great
“ firmness and a clear tone of voice, tho’ persons and estates are subject to law, inclination is independent of that, of fortune, and of
“ every thing. I have always done justice to
“ your merit, and you have ever had my esteem.
“ Your generosity upon this occasion is a most
“ illustrious proof that you deserved it, nor is
“ it possible for a person to be more sensible,
“ than I am, of that tenderness which you have
“ shewn for me, and for my unhappy mother
“ for my sake. But, my lord, that tenderness
“ is what I never can return. The same disposition I had heretofore continues still, my
“ heart belongs to another, to whom it will remain ever constant, and who in this change
“ of fortune is as little changed as myself. I
“ know very well what I reject, and what the
“ consequences must be of my refusing your
“ proposal. But, my lord, I owe this to my
“ own honour, and to the affection of a man
“ of quality, no unequal match in the time of
“ my prosperity, and who sees no inequality in
“ it yet, in the depth of my distress. Think
“ therefore no more of Hermione, but permit
“ her to enjoy in peace what little she has
“ left.”

The

The Count kissed her hand, and having wiped the tears from his eyes, bowed to her mother and Hermione, then retired, without speaking a word. The mother would have called him back, but her daughter prevented her, and they again sat down. After a silence that lasted for some time, the old woman explained to her what she thought of her lovers. “Hermione, said she, I foresee we shall not have many conversations. You have rejected the only offer that could have saved us, and have put it out of my power to lay any blame upon the Marquis. It is evident to me, that my ruin was not the object of this prosecution, but the happiness of his own son. The Count, Hermione, the Count has shewn his affection for you; and all the regard that could be expected for me, without ever departing from the duty he owed his father. In the arms of such a husband you must be happy. His passion for you grew from his infancy, and will certainly continue to the end of his days. The Chevalier was attracted as well by the lustre of your fortune, as of your charms, he supported our cause, believing it his own, but there appears to me no reason to hope, that he will do any thing to support us. I must say plainly, that on that side I think we are abandoned. The generosity of the Count exceeds all expectation, the behaviour of the Chevalier is no more than might have been suspected. You may without prejudice to your virtue, cease to love a man who shews no regard to you, and flies from your disgrace. You may without injury to your honour bestow yourself on one, who has loved you through all fortunes,

“and

“ and who, tho’ slighted when your equal, now
“ offers to share, and even to wipe off your disgrace.”

Hermione’s high spirit prompted her to answer in language, that it would be very improper to repeat. The mother therefore, thought it high time to provide for her own safety, taking therefore her jewels and best effects ; she retired to a convent, after signifying to the Count, that she had done all in her power to engage her daughter to think reasonably, to which she received no other answer, than a purse with two hundred pistoles, which enabled her to appear with decency in the place, which she had chosen for her retreat. When her daughter was informed of this event, the next morning, she did not seem much disturbed by it, but sat down and wrote a long letter to the Chevalier, giving him the detail of the Count’s generosity, and her own constancy, as well as her mother’s retreat ; beseeching him to come immediately and give her his advice, as to the step she was next to take.

The servant who carried this letter, returned with an account, that the Chevalier de Trillac had been abroad, till very late the night before, and was not stirring, but that the letter would be given to him as soon as he awaked. This amazed Hermione exceedingly, and perhaps affected her the more, as she had nobody to console, or comfort her under her misfortunes. She then regretted the departure of her mother, and the strange negligence of her friends ; she could not help observing, how great an alteration a few days had produced, and fancied there did not appear, even in the looks of her domesticks, that

that air of respect and submission, to which she had been accustomed. To divert these melancholy reflections, she busied herself in writing another epistle to her lover, without remembering that it was equally improper and indecent, to fatigue a person with letters, who had given her so little cause to believe, that they made any impression on his mind. This thought however, occurred to her while she was writing, and threw her into so violent a fit of grief, as after weeping bitterly for some time, she tore the paper, and threw it into the fire. It was now near noon, and no news at all either from the Chevalier, or Madam Grangeot; but at length her woman came to acquaint her, that a lady who lived over against her, and who at some times visited her mother, desired to speak with her. Upon this she composed herself as well as she could, and gave orders, that the lady should be admitted, desirous of any amusement that might pass away the time, till she should receive the Chevalier's answer to her letter; for that he would answer it, she was still without a doubt. This neighbour of hers was a lady turned of fifty, blessed with a very affluent fortune, and who had a great resort of the best company to her house, she came out of pure compassion, to admonish Hermione not to make herself ridiculous, and had not the least idea of the consequences, that would attend the news she had to communicate. After the first compliments were over, she took the liberty of giving her the true picture of her lover. "The Chevalier de Tril-
"lac, said she, is a man of gallantry, and his
"addresses have not hitherto been very advan-
"tageous wherever they were paid. His own
"fortune,

“ fortune is but narrow; he lives at a great
“ expence, and play affords but a very incertain
“ revenue. Your great estate would have
“ given him seasonable relief; the prospect of
“ which first drew, and the desire of obtaining
“ it kept him steady in his pursuits, till all hopes
“ were lost. But fortune being so favourable,
“ as to throw a new temptation in his way”—
Hermione was going to reply in justification of
the Chevalier, but these last words stopped her
mouth, and she desired the lady to go on.

“ Fortune, continued the lady, having made
“ him a new offer, he very readily embraced
“ it. A lady at Lyons, who is about my age,
“ and who by the death of three husbands, is
“ in possession of above sixty thousand crowns,
“ fell desperately in love with him, when he
“ was making his addressee to you; but despairing
“ of success, against so fair a rival with a
“ better estate, she very prudently concealed
“ her passion. However, she followed him
“ hither, and three days after the decision of your
“ suit, she engaged a person, who was acquainted
“ with them both, to inform him, that
“ it would be his own fault, if he had not some
“ amends made him for this great disappointment.
“ He received this proposition with eagerness,
“ was introduced to the lady that very evening,
“ was at her house for almost three days
“ together afterwards, and as they were equally
“ impatient, the widow made a grand entertainment
“ last night, when the marriage contract was signed,
“ and immediately after they opened a ball together,
“ which lasted till this morning, and the ceremony
“ of their wedding is to be performed in four days
“ time.

“ I

“ I thought it proper to acquaint you with this,
“ that you may not persecute the Chevalier with
“ letters, of which it is probable he will take
“ no manner of notice, and can therefore serve
“ only, as I said before, to make you ridicu-
“ lous. My daughter and her husband were of
“ the company last night, and you may there-
“ fore rely upon the truth of all that I have told
“ you.”

Hermione made a strong effort to restrain the violence of her sorrow upon this occasion, she thanked the lady for her information and advice, and said she would go immediately, and acquaint a near relation with this strange event. Upon this the lady took her leave, and was hardly out of the room, before Hermione's own woman came in big with the same bad news, which when she began to relate, her lady bid her hold her tongue, and retiring to her seat, after a silence of a few minutes, fell down upon the floor. Her woman calling two other servants to her assistance, got her into bed, and sent for a physician, who found her in a high fever. The news of her malady quickly reached the ears of the Count, who came immediately to the house, where he found things in great confusion. By his direction, all imaginable care was taken of her, and on the third day being very sensible, she desired to see him. It is impossible to describe the excess of his grief, when he perceived death painted in her looks. “ My
“ dear lord, said she, it will not be long before
“ an end will be put to all my troubles, and I
“ hope to yours. I am sensible, perfectly sen-
“ sible of all the obligations that I owe you,
“ but more especially this last, since but for
“ your

“ your goodness, I might probably have been
“ abandoned by all the world. I am now tho-
“ roughly convinced of the wildness and folly
“ of my own conduct, to which I am a victim.
“ Convey my best wishes to your father, ac-
“ cept them for yourself, and for the sake of
“ your own ease forget, if it be possible, that
“ there ever was such a person as Hermione.”

The Count would have spoke, but it was not in his power, and those who were present, thought it prudent to carry him out of the room in the senseless condition, into which his sorrow had thrown him. When he came to himself, he enquired after the lady, and was told that she was speechless, in which condition she continued till the evening of the next day, and then expired.

The Count after the death of his mistress, returned to his father's house, having first given orders, that her funeral should be deferred for a week, when it was performed with great magnificence, the Marquis and the Count attending the body to the church where it was interred. Her fortune of ten thousand livres was given to the convent, to which her mother had retired. The old carpenter was sent to his own village with a competent annuity. The Chevalier who married his widow the very day that Hermione died, was killed the year following in a duel, having spent the best part of her fortune. These are all matters of fact, and as to the process, I have been told, it is considered and cited as a very remarkable case by the French lawyers; sure I am, that the relation carries in it many points of general instruction, which cannot be reflected upon with too much care, since they contain
lessons

lessons of great importance in very different stations of life.

We see from what happened to Margaret the fair, how dangerous a thing it is, to fill the heads of young people with high ideas of their beauty, and to make them believe, that their charms give them some kind of title, superior to the state in which they are born; whereas in truth, beauty in a low condition, is so far from being an advantage, that it is generally speaking the reverse; and the greatest kindness that can be done to young women, who are remarkably handsome, is to convince them of their danger, and of the necessity they are under, to be more attentive to their conduct, than those who are in this respect less esteemed. If Margaret had not been misled by that foolish epithet joined to her name, she might have been happy in her first marriage, and her poor husband had escaped the misery he endured, for upwards of twenty years. Her vanity was the sole source of both their misfortunes, and this boasted beauty of her's, produced nothing but mischief and disquiet wherever it came.

The folly of Mr. Grangeot, in having recourse to so mean and base an action, as procuring a false certificate, in order to betray and mislead an indigent woman, is a glaring proof of that weakness in human nature, which nothing but a firm attachment to just and virtuous principles can remove. What the world too often calls prudence and address, is no more at the bottom, than taking rational steps to serve some unreasonable end. This poor gentleman, no doubt, applauded his own skill, in vanquishing Margaret's scruples; and after many years had

had slept over without any discovery, might probably believe, that the carpenter was really dead. On his death bed however, the scene changed, and he saw clearly, that all his wisdom amounted to no more than outwitting himself, and laying a foundation of mischief and misery, in respect to those whom he loved best.

The great fault of his wife was, that she never profited by the many warnings she received, that she took no pains to eradicate those notions out of the mind of her daughter, which had been so fatal to her own repose ; that on the contrary, she nourished in her the very sentiments, which she knew and felt must be dangerous to her ease ; and that being so much in love with grandeur as she was, arriving at it by so strange a chance, and possessing of it for so long a time, she should neglect securing the possession of it to her daughter, when she had so fair an opportunity of doing it, when it was pressed upon her for years together, and recommended by her husband in his last moments. This teaches us, that people are actually inebriated by prosperity, suffer it to confound and confuse their senses, in so much, that by their preposterous fondness for it, they lose it, and by a kind of wrong-headed chymistry, extract ill fortune out of good.

The haughty spirit of Hermione seems, at first sight, much more excuseable than that of her mother ; but when we examine it closely, we shall see that it only seems so, and that like her we are deceived, by considering barely the outside of things. She had indeed birth and fortune as well as beauty, and from thence the world might conclude her less culpable in her vanity.

vanity. But when we reflect that she had good sense, and the advantage of an excellent education, neither of which her mother had, we cannot help owing, that she was equally, if not more to blame. These would have taught her, if she had listened to their dictates, that noble birth, a mild disposition, and a soul warm with virtue, rendered a man infinitely more amiable than a fine person, and an air of gallantry. Her notions of virtue and honour made her mistake more unpardonable, for setting so high a value upon them in herself, ought to have made them more estimable in her eyes in another person, than any exterior advantages whatever. In fine, love founded upon rational motives is a noble passion, but inclination arising from a transient prospect of an agreeable object is weakness and folly, and yet the principal bane of our sex; and that which exposes us to laughter and contempt, and sometimes, as in this case, to much greater misfortunes.

I ask your pardon for detaining you with these reflections, after tiring your patience with so long a story, but I persuade myself, that you will allow them not to be ill founded, tho' perhaps they may be ill placed. Here are some verses too, which it may be I had better suppressed, but as most people have their foibles, so I am not to learn that the love of poetry is mine, or rather indulging myself to make bad verses, from the delight I take in reading good. However that be, here they are, and how much amiss soever in other respects, they have at least one good quality, which is, that they are but few. Mr. Anguish will to morrow efface the memory of my mistakes, and furnish you with
a fair

Female Arrogance; or,
a fair opportunity of excusing my prolix story,
for the sake of my prudent nomination.

ODE.

I.

*Who seeks to tread the gliding stream,
Or aims upon the wind to ride;
Who thinks to seize the glitt'ring beam,
Who covets nature's flow'ry pride?
At the first glance the humour dies,
Nor folly hopes, nor madness tries.*

II.

*Yet who believes that boundless sway,
Or noble birth or titles vain;
Can true felicity convey,
Or grief remove or banish pain.
Is in the main as much misled,
As if such whimsies rul'd the head.*

III.

*Tho' pleas'd in pictures we behold,
What art describes and genius fires;
Who dreams of hoarding painted gold,
Or who the pencill'd fruit desires?
By sense instructed all the while,
They are but colours, cloth and oil.*

IV.

*Yet should we thus ourselves deceive,
And empty shew for substance take;
We should not farther reason leave,
Than those who form for worth mistake.
Wit, person, dress, must ne'er prevail,
Never drap'ry all, if merit fail.*

V. Good

V.

*Good sense with true good nature join'd,
 A soul sincere a constant heart;
 An open unsuspicious mind,
 That freely will its thoughts impart.
 These only should our wishes warm,
 E'en want they'll sooth, in age they'll charm.*

Amongst all the relations we have heard, said Sir Lawrence Testy, I know none except Olivia's that has affected me so much as this, and that which renders it so affecting is, that except the Chevalier, there is not one character but may be considered in a favourable light. Madam Grangeot was a woman of virtue, and her want of parts and education, as lady Constantia has rightly observed, serves to excuse her, rather than to aggravate her mistakes. Methinks at the conclusion of a story, it is a melancholy circumstance to find every body unhappy; and yet in this case, perhaps we ought to except the old carpenter, for in all probability, he passed the remainder of his days happily enough, and went to his grave in peace. Poor fellow, his head never ached through ambition but once, and he paid for it severely; he had the vanity to marry a beauty, and to gratify the desire of his eye, at the expence of the quiet of his house. If twenty years slavery may be called a martyrdom, I think all these people may be stiled martyrs to their vanity, and this single humour was the source of all their misfortunes. But lady Constantia has given us so good a comment, and applied every part of her relation with so much

propriety, that she must take my silence for applause.

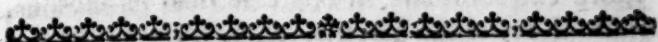
I am entirely of your mind Sir Lawrence, said Olivia, except in the case of the Count, who really seems the person most deserving pity amongst them all, since he never swerved from the principles of virtue, duty or honour. I am sorry methinks, that we do not learn what became of him, for sure so gentle, and so compassionate a disposition merited a better fate; and I will flatter myself, that he found it in the future part of his life. Such a man deserved the best wife of his time, for really the whole tenour of his conduct being kept in view, is so regular, so consistent, and so full of generous tenderness, that had it not been for her repentance at last, I could scarce have beheld the death of Hermione with compassion.

Her ladyship, added Mr. Pensive, has in so strong terms condemned inclination, that I dare not attempt that lady's apology, but beyond all doubt, that Chevalier, let his birth be what it would, was an exceeding bad man, and I dare say, if Courtly were here, he would expatiate upon that character, for he has a most determined hatred to these men of lace and flutter, and looks upon deceiving a woman of family, as one of the greatest crimes that can be committed. And who, dear Sir, added Mr. Anguish, can look upon it in a milder light? People of his stamp are the very pests of the creation, and if ever there was a man justified for taking the life of another, it was he, by whose hand that base, that treacherous fellow met his fate.

The misfortunes of Hermione, said Miss Henrietta, are really deserving of pity, notwithstanding

standing they spring from her own errors, since one sees clearly from the circumstances of the relation, that these errors were, in part, the fruit of wrong instructions from her mother, and partly the consequence of the impressions, naturally flowing from that lady's bad example. Hermione was taught to conceive highly of her own rank, her own charms, and her own fortune, and that these gave her an indisputable right to expect certain qualifications in a lover, of which she only was the proper judge. On the other hand, the usage which her mother gave the Count, and the methods practised by her to prepossess Hermione in her tender years, against the assiduity and submission of that unfortunate young gentleman, must have so much weight with every candid judge, that she must stand in a great measure acquitted of that charge; upon which, exclusive of these mitigations, she might be justly condemned. Besides, it is admitted, that when her mother thought proper to change her conduct in respect to the Count, and to endeavour to overthrow a resolution which she had laboured to form, she nevertheless concealed from the young lady, the true motives of her own conduct, which if mentioned at that season, might have had great weight, as they must have altered, in a great measure, the notions Hermione entertained of her own situation. I say nothing of that bias she might receive from nature, which however is visible enough, in the similitude of the two ladies characters, or rather of their tempers; so that I hope I shall stand excused at least, if not justified in the opinion of this assembly, for regarding not only the death, but the whole conduct of Hermione with pity.

Your reflections, young lady, returned Mr. Beaumont, are very natural and very judicious, tho' at the same time, they are very severe upon Madam Grangeot. They would however, have been better founded, if Hermione had not rejected the last proposition of the Count, at a season when she was fully mistress of her mother's situation and her own, and when she was so far advanced in years, as to possess a judgment very capable of distinguishing between the heroick constancy of the Count, and the unpardonable misbehaviour of the Chevalier. It is true, she made this distinction when it was too late, and borrowed those lights from despair to no purpose, which reason would have lent her in time, if she had been pleased to consult it, instead of adhering to a rash and ill grounded inclination. Believe me, Henrietta, providence is always just, and we owe so much deference to its decisions, as to disclaim opinions that are inconsistent with them ; so that upon the whole, if we are content to excuse your pity, you will, I am persuaded, allow, that even your plausible arguments are not sufficient to justify it. I should not have said so much after all that has been said, and well said too upon this subject, but that my regard for you forbids my using such a complaisance as might possibly fortify a wrong turn in your sentiments ; for believe me, fair one, constancy and obstinacy are different things, however the warmth of inclination may sometimes confound them.



THE
 AMBITIOUS FATHER;
 OR,
 VIRTUE IN DISTRESS.
 A SPANISH HISTORY.



AMONGST those errors that are most common, and at the same time most dangerous in publick and in private life, we may justly reckon, said Mr. Anguish, that unaccountable folly of believing that happiness is inseparably connected with grandeur. A notion so easily refuted by reason, and the falshood of which may be so clearly demonstrated from experience, that if daily instances did not discover the truth of my observation, one might conclude it a thing impossible, for persons endowed by nature with good sense, and not altogether unacquainted with the world, to be deceived by so gross a fallacy, and to confound titles, splendour and equipage, with innocence, satisfaction, and peace of mind, which are the solid blessings of life, and which are far more frequently found

in cottages than courts. But if this error be more extraordinary in one case than in another, it must be where parents, who, from all the ties of nature and affection, are bound to consult the felicity of their offspring, suffer themselves to be so far misled, as to prefer the gratification of their own vanity, to the dictates of prudence, motives of honour, or a sense of tenderness.

In the noble city of Toledo, that ancient capital of Castile, and one of the most famous in the Spanish monarchy, there dwelt an old gentleman descended from an honourable, tho' no very illustrious family, whose name was Don Gusman de Velez. In his youth he had served in the army with great reputation, and had exposed himself very freely in hopes of arriving at high preferment. But whether it was the want of a proper patron, too great an opinion of his own merit, or some other cause with which we are unacquainted, so it happened, that after five and twenty years spent in the camp, without obtaining any higher command than that of a troop of horse, he grew out of love with the life of a soldier, and accepted of a place not very considerable at court. There he flattered himself for some time with the hopes of rising, but with much the same success as before. At length, as if fortune had been weary of persecuting him, and was willing to make some amends for so harsh and tedious a disappointment, she threw in his way a lady of a noble family, not overstocked with beauty, nor in the bloom of her age, but considerably younger than himself, and by the death of her two brothers in the same year, heiress to a very large estate, who upon condition, that he would dispose of his little employment,

ployment, and pass the remainder of his days in the country where she had a fine castle, or at Toledo, where she had one of the best houses in the city, she was content to marry him.

This lady was called Donna Clara de la Cerda, about twenty seven years of age, endowed with many good qualities, happy in an excellent education, and still more so in a fund of good sense, which rendered her of a quiet and easy disposition, virtuous without severity, pious without affectation or superstition, and though descended of a great family, entirely free from pride, properties sufficiently rare in that country, and perhaps not very commonly found together in other climates. She lived with her husband upon very good terms, which was in some measure owing to her discretion, for Don Gomez brought with him from the court an air of gallantry, which might have made some other ladies uneasy, and continued to affect it, when it would have been more natural, or at least more decent, to have laid it quite aside. Donna Clara took as little notice of it as possible, neither disturbed him with her jealousy, nor mortified him with raillery; but behaved upon all occasions with so much modesty and moderation, that she was universally applauded by both sexes; and Don Gomez, amongst other flights of his extravagant humour, would frequently boast, that he had the best wife in Castile. Upon the whole, there were very few of their rank who lived happier, or were in more general esteem, for notwithstanding his foibles, he was brave, generous, and benevolent, which made him well respected by his neighbours, and gained him a good reception amongst persons of the first quality.

lity, who looked upon him as a man that might be safely relied on, and whose friendship therefore was a thing not to be despised.

Towards the close of the second year of their marriage, Donna Clara was brought to bed of a daughter, to whom they gave the name of Isabella. In her tender years she gave pregnant marks of more than ordinary wit ; which, joined with incomparable beauty, made her the delight of her parents. Her mother, contrary to the custom of Spain, would not intrust her education to the care of a governess, but took it entirely upon herself ; which perhaps, might have no small share in rendering Isabella one of the most accomplished ladies in Toledo. Donna Clara was very far from treating her with great severity, but at the same time she kept her much under her eye, and from a pretence of diverting her when at work, made her read most of the best books in their own language, as well of history and poetry, as of divinity, which suiting entirely with her inclination, she began to compose sonnets, elegies, and other little pieces of poesy, which were very deservedly admired, and gained her a great reputation. This however was not over pleasing to Donna Clara, who admonished her frequently to beware of these amusements, and above all to suspect the compliments that were paid her, as flowing rather from the complaisance of others than her own merit ; of which, from her father's turn of mind, she was apprehensive the young lady might entertain too high ideas, which must necessarily produce bad effects. But through the constant exhortations of her mother, she was pretty well defended from this inconvenience, and copied the

the good example of Donna Clara in a very supreme degree.

As for Don Gomez, his daughter became his idol. He looked upon her with the greatest pleasure, he admired every thing she said and did, and he never spoke of her but in raptures. He carried her little poems in his pocket; shewed them to all the people of distinction of his acquaintance, and in short, gave those tokens of paternal fondness, that appear to friends in the light of excusable weaknesses, and are treated by the rest of the world as ridiculous impertinencies. Donna Clara did all she could to moderate this humour in her husband, and whenever she found him disposed to entertain people with the wit, or to tire them with the praises of his daughter's beauty, she took occasion to change the discourse, and in doing this, she found no method more effectual, than to mention the campaigns he had made, or some of the intrigues that were carried on while he remained at court. For these were subjects that gave the old man so much pleasure, that he could not forbear interrupting her, and running into a long recital of military adventures, or those interesting secrets of the cabinet with which he was acquainted; and upon either of these topics, he delivered himself with such a fluency of expression; painted every thing in so sprightly a manner; and interspersed his relations with such judicious and pertinent remarks, as rendered them equally diverting and instructive, more especially to such as had not heard them before.

When Isabella was turned of fifteen, her father was very desirous of finding a suitable match

for her, though Donna Clara thought there was no need of being in any hurry, since a young lady so well born, so agreeable in her person, so happily accomplished, of so good a disposition, and the sole heiress of a considerable estate, was in no danger of wanting lovers, without her father's taking so much pains. But Don Gomez was very sollicitous upon this head, and would willingly have had for his son-in-law, a person of distinguished rank ; one already possessed of some great employment, or at least one that had an indubitable title to it, from the interest of his family. At length he cast his eyes upon the son of Don Juan de Silva, who was a counsellor of the Indies, immensely rich, and had no other child. This same young nobleman, was not under any extraordinary obligations to nature, at least in outward appearance, on the side either of person or of parts. A fall he had received while at nurse had injured his shape ; he could not boast of much learning, or of many polite accomplishments ; but was good natured, mightily pleased with the stories of Don Gomez, and a little too apt to speak of his father's wealth, and his great influence at court. However, the great points of birth, fortune, and reasonable hopes of preferment were plainly in his favour, and the match had certainly been concluded, if two small accidents had not intervened, one of which was, that Isabella hated the sight of him, and the other, that Donna Clara was none of his friend, and besides had a settled aversion, to bring her daughter to think of marriage by constraint.

However Don Gaspar de Silva had free access to the house of Don Gomez, who took a great deal

deal of pains to prepossess his lady in the young gentleman's favour; alledging how nearly he was related to the prime minister; what vast estates he would inherit from his father and his uncle; and what a probability there was, that when Isabella married him, she might govern him as she pleased. The old gentleman did not fail to read his daughter lectures of the same nature, which Isabella answered, by desiring that he would have patience, alledging that she had no inclination to enter so early into the world, but was rather disposed to enjoy the pleasure of his, and of her mother's company, that she might improve herself by the study of such illustrious patterns, and be the less in danger of not coming up to what the world might expect from the child of persons so justly and so generally esteemed.

At the same time that Donna Clara disliked this match, and was not a little apprehensive of the heat with which it was espoused, both by Don Gomez, and the father of the young lover, she could not help being surprised, that notwithstanding Don Gaspar had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Isabella, yet he was very far from shewing himself her passionate admirer; but on the contrary, took in very good part the civil excuses that were made by both these ladies. She took occasion from thence, to support the reasons given by her daughter to Don Gomez for protracting the time; by insinuating, that as Don Gaspar was the only young gentleman permitted to pay his addresses to Isabella, there was no danger of allowing him leisure to make an impression on her heart by his assiduities, and that this

must necessarily be attended with a good effect. Both the fathers entered readily enough into this kind of reasoning ; Don Gaspar made his visits very regularly, and Donna Clara began at last to think, that what at first was meant only as a pretence, might be turned into earnest by degrees, as the young lady was no longer impatient in his company, or troubled her mother with complaints as at the beginning. But this cool manner of proceeding, and the tranquillity of the two families, was suddenly ruffled by the death of Don Gaspar's uncle, who left him his heir. Don Gomez became then very impatient, and told his wife, that it was high time to make Isabella open her eyes to her own interest ; that there was not a family in Toledo but would be proud of this alliance ; and that if it was not for the defect in his person, Don Gaspar might pretend to the daughter of a grandee of Spain. When Donna Clara repeated this to Isabella ; she replied smiling, “ he may
 “ if he pleases, pretend to an infant, without
 “ giving me the least pain. He is very easy
 “ and good natured, and therefore in obedience
 “ to my father's commands, I converse with
 “ him and am not displeased, but to think of
 “ marrying him is out of my power, and I had
 “ rather pass the remainder of my days in a
 “ convent.”

The more Donna Clara reflected upon this brisk answer from her daughter, the less she was in a condition to determine what measures to take. But while she was deliberating upon this point, an accident happened that delivered them both, from all farther trouble upon this head. One evening, when they were diverting themselves
 in

in the garden at their country seat, Don Gomez being gone for a few days to Madrid, a servant came to acquaint Donna Clara, that a young gentleman who had been very intimate with her brothers, and a distant relation of the family, desired to have the honour of delivering a letter into her own hands. He was already in the garden, so that Donna Clara could not avoid giving him audience; to whom he presented a letter from Don Gaspar de Silva, which contained but two lines, importing, that he desired she would give credit to what the bearer should declare to her on his behalf. Donna Clara having read the note, told the gentleman, she was ready to hear all he had to say; upon which he acquainted her in few words, that his friend, while a perfect child, was brought up with Donna Maria de Padila, a young lady of a very high family, whose father dying under a load of misfortunes, had recommended his only child, to the care of Don Juan de Silva, who intended her for his son, till the prosperity of his own affairs induced him to alter his sentiments as to his friend's daughter; upon which he sent her to a sister of his at Cordova, but that Don Gaspar becoming the heir of his uncle, of whose estate he was gone to take possession, went from thence to the city last mentioned, where he had espoused Donna Maria, and humbly intreated them to excuse, all circumstances considered, his behaviour; and to endeavour to make his peace with Don Gomez, which he looked upon to be the only means of restoring him to his father's favour. Donna Clara highly commended the young gentleman's fidelity and generosity, but desired the bearer of this news, to return to
Toledo

Toledo, where Don Gomez was expected the next day, in order to break the matter first to him, and then promised to use all the means in her power, to perfect a reconciliation between the families. To this he readily acquiesced, and took his leave, extremely well satisfied with the success of his commission.

The name of this young gentleman was Don Rodriguez de Luna, somewhat turned of thirty, and one of the most accomplished cavaliers in Castile. His fortune and his family were both very considerable, and Donna Clara was so well acquainted with his character, that when she came to relate this news to her daughter, she could not avoid bestowing on him the praises he deserved; and Isabella having had a full view of him, while he was speaking to her mother, could not help thinking secretly, that he would have been a very improper ambassador, if Don Gaspar had intended to continue his addresses. On their return to Toledo, they found Don Gomez very much out of humour; but Donna Clara having suffered him to exhaust a part of his spleen in violent declamations against Don Gaspar, at length gently interposed, and after observing, that the accident admitted of no remedy, that the father was rather more in fault than the son, and that it would be a mark of his own magnanimity, to treat this affair in another manner; he quickly changed his mind, and at the persuasion of Donna Clara, made a visit to his neighbour, and exhorted him to take in good part a thing that was not to be undone. Don Juan however was not so easily pacified, and something passed in their conversation, which so disgusted Don Gomez, that from a mediator he became

became a party, and declared roundly in favour of Don Gaspar, as having acted in a manner suitable to the laws of honour, since he had not followed his own inclinations, till the succession of his uncle, had in some measure rendered him independent. The true secret however was, his discovering that Don Juan intended to have broke off the match with his daughter, in hopes of marrying his son into one of the greatest families in the kingdom, which was the real source of the resentment he expressed upon this occasion.

In his conversation with Don Gomez, upon the subject of his friend's nuptials, Don Rodriguez had carried himself with such prudence, and behaved with so much respect, that he was become a great favourite, insomuch, that the old man of his own accord mentioned him to Donna Clara before her daughter, as a person for whom he had an extraordinary esteem. Isabella, as soon as she was alone with her mother, told her very frankly, that this discourse was very far from being disagreeable to her, and that if Don Rodriguez was not preingaged as well as his friend, his visits would be more acceptable. Donna Clara advised her to have patience, that her father might have time to introduce him, which she firmly believed he would do, and that for her part, as she knew him better, so she was inclined to think, that Isabella could not make a happier choice. Things in a short time succeeded to their wish; Don Gomez told his lady, that he had now found a cavalier, with whom his daughter might be happy; at the same time that he found in a son-in-law an agreeable companion. Donna Clara kept en-
tirely

tirely upon the reserve, and heard with great patience, the panegyric of Don Rodriguez pronounced with the utmost vehemence; to which she added, that the gentleman was not unknown to her, being some way, though at a distance, related. This was a new advantage; and Don Gomez was now so fond of the match, that he told his lady it should be celebrated without delay, and then, added he, “ I may venture to
 “ pronounce in the face of all my countrymen,
 “ that I have the best wife, the handsomest
 “ daughter, and the most accomplished son-in-
 “ law in Castile. That without doubt I may
 “ do, Donna Clara, and take any miscreant
 “ by the beard, who presumes to question or
 “ deny it.”

A few days after, Don Rodriguez was introduced by Don Gomez, who though it was strongly recommended to him by Donna Clara, to moderate his zeal, could hardly forbear commending him to Isabella before his face, in a pompous string of superlatives, which were naturally hopping about his tongue's end. At the next visit, when Don Rodriguez was alone with the ladies, he frankly confessed, that he had been long in love with Donna Isabella, whom he had seen frequently at mas, and twice or thrice at the house of Don Juan de Silva; that he prevailed upon Don Gaspar to intrust him with his commission, and that he had received from him instructions how to behave towards Don Gomez. “ For, said he, ladies, you are
 “ mistaken in Don Gaspar, who under a very
 “ indifferent appearance, conceals as good a
 “ head, and as honest a heart, as most men in
 “ Spain, with this peculiarity, that he can as-
 “ sume

“sume any character he pleases, and wear it so
“naturally as never to be detected. With you
“he had a mind to pass for a soft head, and
“has frequently entertained me with the ralle-
“ries of Donna Isabella, who fancied he did
“not understand her. His heart was entirely
“devoted to Donna Maria, and therefore he
“was wont to say; I believe I might have trust-
“ed to my person, but to make things secure,
“and to prevent the ladies from suffering me
“to pass muster, I took care to make them
“believe, that my mind had been injured as
“much by the fall as my body.” Donna Cla-
ra could not help laughing at this account, which
put her daughter a little out of humour; this
made her mother laugh the more, but at last
however she asked her gravely, what there could
be in all this, that made her shew such signs
of displeasure? “Bless me, madam, replied Isa-
“bella, do you not perceive, that if I consent
“to believe Don Gaspar no fool, I must con-
“fess myself one in the same breath, which is
“giving the lye to all that Don Gomez has
“been saying for these many years.” In this
pleasant manner they conversed together till things
could be settled, which took up as little time as
possible, Don Gomez expressing the same im-
patience, as if he had known that fortune was
meditating by a cross stroke to rob him of this
son-in-law also.

When there remained nothing more than to
fix a day for solemnizing the wedding, there
came to Toledo with a glittering equipage and
numerous retinue, a Sicilian of the first rank,
called the prince of Francavilla. He was about
five and twenty, tall, well-shaped, but his as-
pect

pect a little effeminate. His behaviour was perfectly polite, and every thing about him very magnificent. Amongst other persons of note, who were introduced to him, Don Gomez was one, who would not have suffered a person of his rank, to pass through the city unseen upon any account. He received him with particular marks of respect, accepted an invitation to dinner at his castle, and remained there all night; and two or three days after, having sent his equipage before him to a sea-port, excepting three or four servants that waited on his person: he desired to be permitted to pay his respects to Donna Isabella, which the father, who could refuse nothing to a prince, who was also nephew to the viceroy, readily granted, and in the space of ten days this new marriage was concluded, notwithstanding the warmest remonstrances from Donna Clara, and the prayers and tears of Donna Isabella.

A day or two before the intended wedding, Donna Clara's woman, whose name was Laura, and who was herself a Sicilian, and a creature of such art, as to manage an intrigue for some years with Don Gomez so dexterously, as not to be suspected by her lady, or any of the family, pretended to be so much moved by the distress of Isabella, that she proposed to that young lady, making her escape, and going away with Don Rodriguez, which she undertook to execute, and which was very readily embraced by both parties, without the privity of Donna Clara. According to the scheme of this woman's invention, Rodriguez was to be at the garden gate with a couple of horses, in the midst of a dark night, and Laura by the help of

of false keys, was to conduct his mistress to him. All things being accordingly adjusted, Rodriguez repaired to the place appointed, where, while he waited, he was suddenly stabbed in the back, and with much pain and trouble retreated to two servants, who remained at some small distance, by whom he was carried home with great difficulty, fainting several times by the way through loss of blood.

In the morning Isabella being missing, and a letter found in her chamber directed to her mother, containing an apology for her conduct, the whole city was alarmed. Don Gomez immediately applied to the governor, in order to obtain satisfaction for this insult; but when it was known that the lady was gone, and Rodriguez lay dangerously ill in his own house, nobody knew what to make of it. The prince of Francavilla seemed to treat it as a mystery, in which the whole family had some concern; sent back a letter he received from Don Gomez unopened, and quitted the city in two days, with an air of high resentment. In this situation Don Gomez breathed nothing but revenge against the unfortunate Rodriguez, from whom the loss of his mistress was concealed, till he was out of danger, and then the governor, attended by the proper officers of justice, came to his house and examined him; Don Gaspar de Silva came likewise to Toledo upon this occasion, to give him all the assistance that was in his power, with which his father was so well pleased, that they were perfectly reconciled.

By their interposition, Don Gomez was prevailed upon to suspend his process; and though he was hardly able to travel, Don Rodriguez resolved

resolved to follow the prince of Francavilla, whom he justly suspected to be at the bottom of this dark scene. But when he arrived at the sea port, he found the prince was embarked for Sicily, and notwithstanding all the enquiry he could make, was unable to discover that he had any woman in his company. He determined however to proceed directly to the same island, to which perhaps he was as much excited by a spirit of vengeance, as by his affection for Isabella. It was not long before he found a bark bound for Naples, on board which he took his passage, as knowing it would be easy to proceed thence to Messina. Let us however leave him at sea, and return to Toledo, where they had much earlier news of what had befallen the unfortunate Isabella.

The house of Don Gomez, from being the most chearful and peaceable in the whole city, was after this accident become the seat of sorrow and distraction. At first he was all flame and fury ; sometimes railing at Don Rodriguez, sometimes at his daughter ; sometimes at the Sicilian prince. Once he lost himself so far, as to speak with great passion to Donna Clara, who, without any emotion, made him this answer.

“ When I married you, Don Gomez, I was
 “ not unacquainted either with your humours or
 “ your foibles, the former I have indulged, and
 “ have born with the latter as much I believe
 “ as any of my sex. If I was conscious to myself of being in any respect in the wrong, I
 “ should bear with you now ; but as this heavy
 “ misfortune of losing my only child, the heiress of that fortune I brought you, proceeds
 “ entirely from your own ill conduct, and that
 “ strange

“ strange spirit of vanity that has ruled in you
“ from your cradle, and will sway you to your
“ grave ; it is a little too hard to bear both that
“ and your reproaches. I had before now re-
“ tired from the world, if I did not still retain
“ some hopes of retrieving that unhappy child,
“ who if she was guilty of a fault, was driven
“ to it by your unaccountable behaviour ; but
“ as a drop or two poured into a vessel that is
“ full, makes it run over, so the disorder of my
“ mind is at present at such a height, that the
“ smallest addition may have effects that you
“ do not foresee. You have already lost your
“ daughter, perhaps it would not add to your
“ comfort if you should lose your wife likewise.”

Don Gomez was astonished at this speech, and after a silence of some minutes, answered,
“ Donna Clara, you are in the right, pardon
“ this one act of indiscretion, and you shall find,
“ that the longest follies have an end. But tell
“ me, can you suggest nothing that my con-
“ tribute to the redress of this insupportable
“ evil ?” “ No, replied Donna Clara, all the
“ remedy that I can advise is that which I prac-
“ tise, patience and prayer.”

In this disconsolate condition they continued three months, without hearing the least tittle of Isabella, and without any other news from Rodriguez, save that he was sailed for Italy. At length one day, towards the dusk of evening, a servant belonging to one of the inns at Toledo, addressed himself to one of the domestics of the family, and asked if he could bring him to the speech of Donna Clara. The groom, for it was to him he applied, said, that his lady should be acquainted that he desired to speak with her ;
which

which was no sooner done, than orders were given to introduce him. He put into her hand a note, which she knew to be Isabella's writing, desiring to know if she could be brought into the house, without her father's knowledge, and at what hour. Donna Clara answered without the least emotion, that the person from whom he came, would find the groom at the back door, ready to conduct her whenever she pleased. The man was scarce gone, than she acquainted Don Gomez, who very readily condescended, that Donna Clara should receive her alone, and that he would not disturb them till Isabella should give her consent. This point was hardly agreed to, before the groom appeared to give his lady notice, that the person she expected was come, and waited for her in her apartment. Donna Clara hastened thither, and notwithstanding all her prudence and precaution, she no sooner saw and embraced her daughter, than she fell into a swoon, crying in a shrill voice, "My Isabella is found! she is found!" Upon this two or three women servants running into the room to assist her, the good news was quickly divulged through the family, though their lady the moment she came to herself, forbid them to mention her daughter's being there on pain of her highest displeasure.

When the ladies were again left alone, Donna Clara informed Isabella, that her father's disposition was quite altered, that therefore she could not reconcile to herself, the concealing from him a minute so happy an event, and that he had condescended to leave them together, till she should be disposed to see him. "So may that providence, replied Isabella, that

“ has hitherto preserved me, continue his favourable protection, as there is nothing I so earnestly desire, as to throw myself at the feet of Don Gomez, whose only fault has been wishing me too well. Let me not, madam, prolong my father's anguish a moment; I only dreaded the violence of his temper, and since that is worn off, I have nothing else to fear.” Donna Clara left her for a small space, and then returned with her husband, who welcomed his daughter with the utmost affection, and after they had recovered a little from their mutual transports of joy, Isabella composed herself as well as she could, and having requested leave of her parents to speak, proceeded thus :

“ The design of retiring from hence, did not arise either from myself or Don Rodriguez, though the truth is, and I look upon it as my duty to acknowledge it, that this was no sooner proposed, than we readily embraced it. The treacherous authoress of this project, was Laura, moved, as she pretended, by compassion, but in reality bribed by that vicious and cruel prince. She not only put it first into my head, and then mentioned it to Don Rodriguez, but contrived and executed the whole of what she called my escape, by the help of false keys, by which she opened all the apartments, between mine and the great garden. It has since occurred to me, that these keys could not be made for this design, because there was not full three days between the proposing and the execution of it. When we came into the garden it was very dark, and she took care to hold me in discourse till we got to the gate, which leads towards the Ta-

“ gus,

“ gus, which when she had opened and had let
 “ me thorough, she hastily shut and retired herself.
 “ I was then prodigiously amazed, knowing
 “ that it was the opposite gate to which Rodri-
 “ guez was to come. But before I could reco-
 “ ver in any degree from my surprise, two men
 “ laid hold of me, and forced me to mount on
 “ horseback behind a third, threatening to kill
 “ me if I made the least noise. After galloping
 “ about a league and a half, we came into the
 “ great road, where a calash attended, into
 “ which I was again put by force, with the per-
 “ son who had rode before me.

“ We travelled with the utmost expedition
 “ till about seven in the morning; when the
 “ vehicle in which I was, turned out of the road,
 “ and brought me to a little ordinary house that
 “ stood by itself, where without seeing any body
 “ but the person who sat by me in the calash,
 “ and the two servants who rode behind it, I
 “ was conducted into a little room, in which
 “ there was a bed, and told, that I might re-
 “ pose myself if I pleased; after which the man
 “ retired, and left me alone. I examined the
 “ place very carefully, to see if there was no
 “ possibility of escaping, but was quickly con-
 “ vinced that was impracticable, as there was
 “ but one window, under which I saw the three
 “ men sitting at breakfast. I then placed an
 “ old empty coffer against the door, so that it
 “ could not be opened without throwing it
 “ down, and then threw myself on the bed in
 “ my cloaths. After weeping as long as I had
 “ any strength, I fell into a kind of slumber,
 “ from which I was roused by the tumbling
 “ down of the coffer. I got up hastily, and
 “ saw

“ saw the two servants bringing in a table, upon
“ which they placed chocolate, biscuits, and a
“ bottle of water. After I had taken some re-
“ freshment, wept, and prayed, I placed the
“ coffer again a-cross the door, and laid me down
“ upon the bed. A few hours after, the door
“ was opened in the same manner, and some
“ fowl and fish placed upon the table, with
“ other things necessary, which however I did
“ not touch. As soon as it was dark, I was
“ put again into the calash, and observed that
“ all the horses were changed; we travelled in
“ the same manner the next day; quitted the
“ high road in the like manner, and came to
“ another remote house, where I was treated
“ as before.

“ We set out again before it was dark, and
“ the fifth morning, when it was hardly light,
“ as we were passing the mountain of Torcal,
“ the calash suddenly stopped, being surrounded
“ by several persons on horseback well armed.
“ They immediately pulled the man out of it,
“ but suffered me to remain unmolested, tho’
“ frightened to the last degree. I saw them strip
“ him and the other two almost naked, taking
“ every thing they had, together with their horses,
“ and those that drew the calash. When they
“ had done, a man, who seemed to me be-
“ tween twenty and thirty years of age, de-
“ sired me civilly to get up behind him, assur-
“ ing me, that I should not receive any ill
“ treatment, and after an hour’s riding thro’
“ the wildest country I ever beheld, he brought
“ me to a kind of a house cut in a rock, and
“ left me with an old man, and a woman, who
“ though much younger, seemed to be about
VOL. II. I “ forty.

“ forty. They used me with great kindness
 “ and compassion, and after hearing my story,
 “ the old man said, I am called Foelix, and was
 “ once a person of no mean condition ; I have
 “ lived in this way, though not in this place
 “ near thirty years ; being driven to this kind
 “ of life by an adventure not much unlike that
 “ of Rodriguez ; the young man who brought
 “ you hither is my son ; this woman is his
 “ aunt, the sister of my deceased wife. I will
 “ leave you to her care and direction, and by
 “ the help of patience and discretion, it is not
 “ impossible that you may be rescued from your
 “ misfortunes.

“ The first thing that Dorothea, which was
 “ the woman’s name, did, was to oblige me
 “ to change my cloaths from head to foot, giv-
 “ ing me some of her sister’s, which, though
 “ very plain were neat and fitted me very well ;
 “ she then brought me such victuals as they
 “ had ; and after I had taken some refreshment,
 “ advised me to repose myself, adding, that I
 “ must take a long walk in the evening. She
 “ then retired, and sorrow and fatigue having
 “ exhausted my spirits, I lay down on a bed,
 “ and slept for the first time very soundly ; for
 “ there was something so tender and humane in
 “ these people, that notwithstanding the place
 “ and the situation I was in, there remained
 “ none of those apprehensions, by which I had
 “ been hitherto tormented. When I had rest-
 “ ed some hours, Dorothea called me up,
 “ and I found had provided a mule, doubting
 “ my ability to walk. I rode behind a boy of
 “ twelve years of age, but slowly, as Dorothea
 “ went on foot ; as it grew dark we entered a
 “ village,

“ village, where I dismounted, and the boy re-
 “ turned ; Dorothea conducting me to a little
 “ house , where the old man’s son dwelt with
 “ his wife and family, consisting of a boy of
 “ about seven years of age, a girl that could
 “ run alone, and another at the mother’s breast.
 “ With these people I resided till about five
 “ days ago ; being treated all the time with the
 “ utmost civility and respect, on my promise to
 “ say nothing of the manner in which I fell
 “ into their hands ; for they made their neigh-
 “ bours believe, that I was a relation sent thi-
 “ ther for the recovery of my health.

“ I learned from the young woman, his
 “ daughter-in-law, that Fœlix was a gentleman
 “ of a good family, who for taking the daugh-
 “ ter of a rich merchant at Malaga out of a
 “ convent, into which she was forced, through
 “ the cruelty of her mother-in-law, had been
 “ deprived of his estate, and sentenced to lose
 “ his head, which obliged him to fly into these
 “ mountains, where by his extraordinary saga-
 “ city, he had protected himself and upwards
 “ of twenty other persons in the like desperate
 “ circumstances, from the pursuit of justice.
 “ Amongst these was the husband of his wife’s
 “ younger sister, who had been condemned to
 “ death, for transporting silver out of the king-
 “ dom ; and that the husband of this young
 “ woman was not at all suspected by his neigh-
 “ bours, as he went but seldom to visit his fa-
 “ ther, in order to obtain some supplies for the
 “ support of his family. Her brother being in
 “ the service of the governor of Malaga, they
 “ took the opportunity of his coach going
 “ empty to this city to send me back, upon a
 “ promise,

“ promise, that I would discover nothing to
 “ their prejudice. In order to this, her hus-
 “ band carried me by night to Antequera,
 “ where I put on again my own cloaths, and
 “ came to Toledo in the coach before-men-
 “ tioned, accompanied by the brother of my
 “ hostess, who took all imaginable care of me
 “ upon the road, without making any enqui-
 “ ries. Such have been the strange adven-
 “ tures of the unfortunate Isabella, now happy
 “ in being restored to the arms of her parents,
 “ and thoroughly convinced of the folly of
 “ seeking felicity, in any other road than that
 “ of the most perfect obedience, from which it
 “ is impossible she should ever swerve a second
 “ time.”

Don Gomez, as soon as his daughter had
 done speaking, went out, in order to give di-
 rections for securing Laura; but upon the first
 rumour of the young lady's being come home,
 she withdrew to her own apartment, and by the
 help of her false keys made her escape, taking
 with her some of her master's jewels, and a
 small sum of ready money that was in his ca-
 binet. By the advice of Donna Clara, there
 was no search made after her, nor had they any
 certain tidings what became of her, only her
 lady conjectured, that she was returned to her
 own country. The peace of the family would
 have been entirely restored, if they had known
 how to convey the news of Isabella's return to
 Don Rodriguez; for whose safety they were all
 very uneasy, and indeed not without reason,
 none of his friends having received any account of
 him, from the time of his embarking for Italy,
 notwithstanding that Don Gaspar de Silva had
 written

written on his behalf to the Viceroy of Naples, and had given him credit on one of the richest bankers in that city, for whatever sums he might have occasion, during his residence there.

His impatience had induced him to venture his safety on board a very slight vessel, which after suffering much by foul weather, and very narrowly escaping from an Algerine corsair, was obliged to put in at the port of Cagliari, in the island of Sardinia. The Spanish Viceroy was a nobleman, well known to Don Rodriguez, and he was constrained to make use of his friendship, in order to prosecute his voyage; the vessel in which he came being shattered to such a degree, that the crew refused to proceed till she was thoroughly repaired. As this was the stormy season of the year, he was detained there near two months, which was the reason that his friends could hear nothing from him in Spain. At last the Viceroy procured him a passage on board a galley, which landed him safely at Naples, where he resided in the house of a goldsmith, till by making proper enquiries, he could determine what measures to take. He had been but a few days in this city, before he heard, at the goldsmith's table, that the servants of a Sicilian prince were in prison for poisoning him; and upon his asking the name of that prince, he found it was the same of whom he was in search. As this was likely to save him a voyage to Sicily, he desired his landlord, as if it had been merely a matter of curiosity, to gain the best intelligence he could of this affair, which he accordingly did. The substance of his account was to the following effect; that the prince having employed five of his servants in carrying off a Spa-

nish lady, with whom he was in love, she was taken from them on the road by certain banditti, who had stripped them; that upon their bringing this news to the prince their master, he was so transported with fury, that instead of pitying their condition, he caused them to be severely chastised, as if the loss of his mistress had been owing to their neglect. In revenge for this, they had poisoned him on board his ship in his chocolate; but by the skill and care of a surgeon belonging to the vessel, his life was saved, at the expence of an eye, and of a paralytic disorder on one side of his body, so that he was unable to walk; and in spite of all the diligence that could be used by the physicians, was likely to remain in that condition as long as he lived.

This story excited the attention of Don Rodriguez to such a degree, that he spared no pains or cost to procure a copy of their process, from which it appeared, that only three of the servants had been concerned in carrying away the lady, but that the other two were privy to the poisoning of their master, from a different motive, which the judges were not able to learn. As the family of the prince were very rich and powerful, this prosecution was carried on with the utmost vigour, so that the first three criminals were quickly sentenced to suffer death. The natural tenderness of Don Rodriguez's temper, hindered him from being present himself at the execution, but the goldsmith went thither at his desire; and falling into discourse with some of the prince's friends, upon hearing Don Rodriguez's name mentioned, he very inadvertently told them, that gentleman was then at Naples, and lodged at his house, of which they seemed to
take

take little notice ; and at his return, the goldsmith, who gave him a large detail of their confessions, let slip this circumstance entirely, as not being willing to make Don Rodriguez acquainted with his having learned the cause, that made him so solicitous about this matter.

But those agents having informed the prince's relations of what they had heard, it was immediately surmised by them, that these servants must be instigated by him to the perpetration of the fact. Upon this, without mentioning it to the prince, whose senses were very much impaired, they procured Don Rodriguez to be arrested, and sent prisoner to the new castle. As the process against him was founded entirely upon conjecture, it went on but slowly, and in the mean time, the letters from Don Gaspar de Silva arrived, upon which the Viceroy interposed ; caused Don Rodriguez to be brought into his presence ; and having learned from him the true state of things, and that he had never seen either the prince or his servants, from the time that Isabella was carried away, he discharged him from his confinement upon his parole. One of the servants in prison, was the prince's valet de chambre, and the other his groom ; and upon their being put to the torture, the former confessed, that he administered the poison, in revenge for his master's refusing to give him an hundred ducats, which he had promised, for managing the intrigue with Laura ; and the latter owned, that he procured and prepared the poison, because the prince had given him but one half of the sum he promised, for stabbing Don Rodriguez at the garden gate ; alledging, that as he did not die of the wound, he had

more than he deserved. They confirmed this confession on the scaffold, when they came to suffer death, adding, that what they did, was originally suggested by the other three, who had proposed several methods of dispatching their master, which not being approved, they undertook and managed the poisoning themselves; but with the privity of the rest, who laboured all they could to conceal it; giving out, that the prince's distemper arose from his surfeiting himself, by eating too much of some fish that had been caught by the sailors, and which were vulgarly reputed unwholesome, and that the earnestness expressed by them in propagating this story, created the first suspicions, and made way for the discovery of the whole affair.

Don Rodriguez, as soon as this business was over, embarked for Spain, his innocence having fully appeared, as well as the black design of the prince against his life. He arrived safely at Alicante, and from thence made all the haste he could towards Toledo. When he came thither, he went to the house of his friend Don Gaspar, from whom he received the first accounts of Donna Isabella's being safely returned home some weeks before. He was quickly invited to the house of Don Gomez, and received there with all the joy imaginable. The good old gentleman in particular caressed him, as if he had been already his son-in-law, and gave immediate directions for the celebration of the wedding, which was solemnized with the utmost magnificence, and honoured with the presence of all the persons of distinction in Toledo. At the close of the feast, when Don Gomez was in the full flow of good humour, he turned to Donna Clara,

Clara, and said with a loud voice, "I have a long time done penance for my mistaken politics, and have not suffered any of those sallies to escape me, with which I was formerly wont to entertain my friends; but this Donna Clara is a day of liberty, and I cannot refrain from speaking the truth to people's faces: therefore, be it known to all present, that if any man in Old or New Castile, can produce a better wife, a fairer daughter, or a worthier son-in-law, I Don Gomez de Velez will give him a thousand ducats in gold, if not, they shall be bestowed on the great hospital, to the glory of God, and for the relief of the poor." The whole company applauded Don Gomez's generosity, and decreed the money to the hospital, to which it was instantly sent. Don Rodriguez, by the interest of Don Juan and Don Gaspar de Silva, procured a grace for Felix and his son, from the Viceroy of Granada; and Don Gaspar settled them in a farm of his near Cordova, in return for their honourable behaviour towards Donna Isabella, who lived many years happily with her husband, and left him a numerous posterity.

The many years I have spent in a foreign country, and the small leisure I have had to cultivate those studies, to which my youth was no stranger, made me desirous of avoiding that law to which I thought myself incapable of paying obedience; and tho' in that you are pleased to indulge me, yet finding myself drawn, tho' not compelled, by a stronger law, which is that of example, I have ventured more especially, seeing Olivia renounce the privilege of exemption, to give you a short copy of English verses

178 The Ambitious Father ; or,
in a Spanish form, which though they should
not please, will, I dare say, not offend.

SONNET.

*If vanity once rule the human mind,
It roves relentless on from claim to claim ;
Still to wild hopes and airy dreams inclin'd,
Nor disappointments cure nor age can tame.*

*If love of pleasure, reason's powers controul,
Worn out with lusts, the wretched victim dies ;
No friendly care can cleanse th' encumbred soul,
Since the rank soil, weed after weed supplies.*

*The nobler passions which from nature spring,
By virtue govern'd as by genius led ;
No lawless force, no subtle counsels bring,
But in the paths direct of honour tread.
As prudence dictates, now resist, now bend,
And reach by slow, but honest means their end.*

We are much obliged to you, Sir, said lady Constantia, for this instructive discourse, in which you have done so great honour to our sex ; since if I am not much mistaken, the character of Donna Clara is the most perfect, and consequently the most illustrious in your history. The choice of a man of honour, independent of the circumstances of age and fortune to be a companion for life, shews the uprightness of her heart, and the excellence of her understanding. Her complaisance in bearing his humours, notwithstanding her good sense, kept her from being infected by them, is a very strong feature, and

the whole of her behaviour towards her daughter equally natural and commendable. When I say it is natural, I mean, that it plainly arises from the lady's disposition, and is a consequence that flows clearly from those principles, by which she appears to have been governed in other respects; and when I assert it to be commendable, I mean, that a just retrospect should be had to the motives upon which she acted, as well as a view to the good effects that her conduct produced. Upon the whole, she is shewn in a very uniform and consistent light, which as it renders her virtues more imitable, ought not at all to lessen our respect. There may be, I grant, more heroic characters than that of Donna Clara; instances of particular virtues more striking, and therefore more apt to excite vulgar applause; but such characters are liable to weaknesses also, which such as celebrate them industriously keep out of sight. But here there is no room for such a suspicion; the character is equally round and fair, and all her good qualities have such a relation to each other, as reconcile them entirely to probability.

By your ladyship's favour, interposed Sir Lawrence Testy, the picture that my friend has drawn of Don Gomez, is not at all less natural than that of his lady. His extravagancies have something in them of singularity, but to me at least, they have somewhat that is not altogether displeasing. I shall readily grant that moderation is very beautiful and engaging; but as your ladyship says, there is something very striking, even in the excesses of certain qualities. That affection which Donna Clara had for her daughter is better regulated, but the tenderness of

Don Gomez is stronger, and has the true air of a sincere passion. Both are very natural ; for as you have justly hinted temper and good sense are the excellencies of the mother, and these must produce precisely that kind of concern which she expresses for Isabella. Ambition is the ruling passion in Don Gomez, we need not wonder therefore he strayed from the right path, in aiming at his daughter's felicity, since he was continually starting the same way, when he had his own in view. But his condescension to his wife, after the loss of his daughter, is to me very fine. Don Gomez and Donna Clara seem to change characters ; there appear fervour and firmness in her conduct ; complacency and even submission in his ; and yet this contrast is perfectly agreeable to human nature. Donna Clara had little to fear ; she was almost as unhappy as she could be ; moderation was then no longer a virtue. Don Gomez had miss'd his view ; saw the bad effects of his mistake, and yet was sensible that his lady's retiring to a convent, would be worse than all he had felt. This gave a just check to his humour. There is a wide difference between exceeding due bounds, and passing over all ; as the rising of a river is very distinct from an inundation.

As for me, said Olivia, I admire the good qualities of Don Rodriguez, in whose actions we see nothing but what answers exactly to the character of a man of honour. I do not so much as except his project of carrying away Isabella ; for I cannot think, that the consent of a father once given, can be revoked, without any fault alledged in the person to whom it was made. His following the prince into Italy,

is a proof of his constancy and intrepidity ; in short, as lady Constantia has very well expressed it, his character is round and fair, and as Sir Lawrence has told us, such characters are the most amiable though not the most striking. Certainly, said Mr. Pensive, your sentiments, madam, are very right, and I am led from the very same principle, to declare, that I am perfectly pleased with the character of Don Gaspar de Silva, which though it does not make a very shining figure in the relation, yet has something in it that deserves our attention. Constancy in friendship, and fidelity in love are great virtues, and his dexterity in letting down his own character, considering the circumstances in which it is placed, must give us a very high idea of the sincerity of his heart, and the soundness of his understanding. It is true, he appears but seldom in the drama, yet when he does appear, his actions are perfectly uniform, and breath such a spirit of candour, generosity, and goodness, as oblige us to love him whether we will or not.

If I did not think, added Miss Henrietta, that her virtues would suffer from the management of so bad an advocate, I should have a strong inclination to commend Isabella. Her consenting to leave her father's house, seems to be the only point in her conduct that deserves an apology, and that lady has laid down a rule in reference to her father's promise, that will go a great way towards it. For to suppose, that a young woman can alter her inclinations with as much facility as her father alters his views, derogates no less from her character than disobedience. Such a person must have a flexibility, that how well soever it may be approved in a daughter,

no man would esteem in a wife, and therefore I think, I may safely applaud the character of Isabella, without prejudice to my own. Remember however, young lady, said Mr. Beaumont, that to-morrow you are to exhibit a character that may merit universal applause ; and though your reflections are very just, as well as very handsomely expressed, give me leave to put an end to our sessions for this night. The company received this admonition with great good humour ; and after the gentlemen had taken their leaves, immediately broke up.

THE

THE
 RECONCILIATION;
 OR, THE
 HUSBAND UNMASK'D.
 A N

Entertaining Story from the French.



Am so well apprised, said Miss Henrietta, after having paid her respects to her mother and the company, of the reputation that Calista and Charlotte have acquired, by the histories, which they have related before part of this assembly; that joined to the natural diffidence I have of my own abilities, I cannot help appearing to night with some confusion; and what rather augments than diminishes my concern, is the choice I have made of a performance, which is totally deficient in those ornaments, that have rendered the discourses I have heard so pleasing and acceptable. It is now too late to repent, and all I have left for it, is to declare ingenuously, that my liking to it, was determined from a persuasion, that it was lively, probable

probable and instructive. If it does not come up to this character, the blame must be upon me, for certainly how indifferent soever my talents are in other respects, it could never have imposed to such a degree upon my judgment, had it been totally destitute of merit. Let us put it to the trial then, and having said all I can for my story, let us see what it will say for me.

The love of pleasure certainly costs us too dear when it breaks in upon our tranquillity, and there cannot be any thing more inexcusable, than to sacrifice peace of mind for a transitory delight. This observation is certainly just, and ought to have its weight, notwithstanding which, I doubt that it is very seldom attentively considered by our sex, and more especially by such giddy girls as myself. We are too apt to fancy, that if we are guilty of no great faults or foibles, we should meet rather with indulgence than censure ; and yet I very much doubt, if the records of experience were searched, whether the number of women made miserable by their vices, would considerably exceed those who have been ruined merely through indiscretion. There is an Italian proverb, that female reputation is like a Venice glass, inimitable while it remains whole, but irreparable when injured. Such tender things should therefore be treated with great caution, and those who have them in their possession, must never pretend to prudence, if merely from a spirit of frolic, they expose them to danger.

Mr. de Bellegarde was a French gentleman, blessed with all the ingredients of happiness in the middle state of life. In his youth he had been gay and gallant, but saw through the vanity of what the world calls pleasure, in proper time ;

time; and at the age of twenty six, married a young lady in every respect his equal. They had a very ample fortune, were both endowed with good sense, had each of them the advantage of a finished education, and lived together in a manner that made them admired by all their acquaintance, who distinguished them by the name of the happy couple. The husband was perfectly sober, without being at all severe, generous, and yet a good oeconomist, complacent to his wife, without any thing either of meanness or of flattery. On the other hand the lady, tho' she had all the charms of youth, beauty, and wit, was unexceptionable in her behaviour, strictly virtuous, extremely good humoured, and shewed her husband all the submission he could desire, which however he never seemed to exact. They lived much at home, for home was agreeable, when they went abroad it was generally together; for Mr. Bellegarde had no taste for publick diversions, unless shared by his wife. She never asked any thing that was unreasonable, and was never refused any thing that she asked. In short, they seemed to have the same views and the same will, so that by studying to please each other, they totally banished both indolence and chagrin.

So perfect a state of felicity was once, and but once in danger of being subverted. The lady had but one concealed passion, for whatever influences the mind in a degree inconsistent with reason ought to be esteemed such, and this was an immoderate love of dancing. Her husband never abridged her of the liberty of going where she pleased, and took not the least exception at her preferring balls to more rational entertainments.

ments. All this however would not do, she longed for a masquerade, and a masquerade of her own, where without any restraint she might enjoy the satisfaction of dancing, laughing, and jesting, with whom she thought fit, and as long as she would. Such a masquerade must be in the absence of her husband, which made way for a wish, she had never known before, that of her husband's being absent. She communicated this whim to three or four of his friends, who were her particular admirers, taking that word in its true sense, for her thought was as innocent as her look, and her mind as unfulled as her beauty.

They applauded her notion, for men have too much gallantry to hazard the opinion of a woman they esteem, even by salutary contradiction, and one of them, who was a man of great fortune, offered to divert her with such a masquerade when opportunity should serve. It was not long before chance furnished this, Mr. Bellegarde dropped one day an intimation that he should be shortly obliged to go to Versailles about an affair that would take up the best part of a week. From that moment this journey run continually in the lady's head, and as innocence is incompatible with dissimulation, she could not help asking a little too frequently when he would go to Versailles? Whether the affair was not quite ripe, or whether Mr. Bellegarde took so much pleasure in his family, as to be in no hurry about this expedition, so it was, that he delayed it a considerable time, notwithstanding his memory was so often refreshed, of which, at last however, he began to take notice. The air with which his wife spoke shewed him plainly, that
his

his absence would give her no disturbance, which was what he could not possibly see without dislike.

After much deliberation and reflection, which gave him exceeding disquiet, he became thoroughly convinced in his own mind, that there was some mystery at the bottom, which his wife was very careful to conceal. He tried as much as it was in his power to persuade himself there was nothing criminal in this scheme, let it be what it would; yet when he reflected upon the terms on which they had hitherto lived, his constant complaisance for his lady even in things that he did not altogether approve, and the tender affection she always expressed for him, he knew not what to think. It came at length into his head, that perhaps her woman was in the secret, and tho' it was not without reluctance, he determined with himself to try whether a present might not bring her to confession, and this resolution once taken was executed without delay.

The woman can never be long happy that puts herself into another woman's power. Phillis who had a thousand obligations to her lady hated her heartily, because in her wife opinion she was not familiar enough with a person of her extraordinary merit. This admirable disposition, with the desire of becoming mistress of ten pistoles, a sum which till that time had never been in her possession, quickly inclined her to comply with Mr. Bellegarde's request, and to inform him, that in the evening of that day, on which he was to set out for Versailles, her lady proposed to divert herself with a masquerade, to which abundance of persons of distinction were to be invited,

invited, adding with an air of silly solemnity, that she was sure there was no harm in it, for that her lady was the modestest woman in the world, tho' she had indeed a very particular esteem for the gentleman who was to conduct this diversion and be at the expence of it. Mr. Bellegarde gave her the ten pistoles together with the necessary instructions, as to the farther service that he expected in return for the like present, after which they parted. Mr. Bellegarde somewhat more at ease, and Phillis in very high spirits, as having gratified the reigning passions of a low mind, envy and avarice.

The first thing Mr. Bellegarde did, was to take such measures, as that his business at Versailles might be very speedily accomplished, and having effected this, he told his lady the same evening while at supper, that he proposed to set out the next morning early for the court, which he saw gave her a degree of pleasure, that she knew not well how to conceal. Phillis had immediate directions to inform her lady's friend of this important point, and her husband was no sooner gone the next day, than the lady entered eagerly on the mighty business of getting every thing in order for this agreeable entertainment. The room appointed for the assembly was a spacious salon at the bottom of their garden, which was finely illuminated on the occasion, and sideboards provided, spread with the greatest delicacies, accompanied with a grand desert of sweetmeats, and furnished with the utmost variety of the choicest and richest wines that had been provided in time by the gentleman so often mentioned, and which were sent in with all imaginable privacy.

All the company were to come masked, and to be admitted at the back door by the help of this signal, the mask was to give three gentle raps, and then to pronounce the word **LIBERTY**, upon which the trusty Phillis, in the dress of an Amazon, was to give entrance. Things being thus settled, and every precaution taken to prevent a secret of such consequence from transpiring, the Swiss at the great gate had orders to tell any who should enquire either for Mr. Bellegarde or his lady, that they were gone to Versailles. The afternoon furnished more than time sufficient for all these labours, so that Madame Bellegarde, after fatiguing herself and her servants, had leisure enough to consider the elegant disposition made for the reception of her guests, and the pleasure which arose from thence growing flat by degrees, she waited with great impatience for the clock striking ten, for such is the strange nature of these kind of amusements, that the joy is ever placed in expectation, and scarce at all relished in the possession.

Phillis in the mean time snatched an opportunity of going to the place her master had appointed, where she gave him a full account of the situation things were in, and acquainted him with the signal, which intelligence procured the other ten pistoles, so that she returned with a quick step and a light heart, and was scarce arrayed in her habit of ceremony, before her lady sent orders for her to repair to her post, as well as to be extremely careful, that nobody had entrance without giving the word, that every thing might be conducted with as much silence as possible, to prevent the neighbourhood from knowing any thing of the masquerade. In short,
 matters

matters were so well managed, that tho' by a quarter after eleven, there were one hundred persons in the room, yet the whole had been contrived with such regularity, that every body confessed they had never seen a diversion of the kind, in which dignity and decency were better maintained. The usual compliments of ceremony, and the conversation ordinary in such places being over, the musick began to play, and the ball was opened by the gentleman who gave, and the lady at whose house it was given.

As the clock struck twelve, the husband entered in the dress of a harlequin, which character he sustained with all the spirit and humour imaginable. No mortal suspected who he was, for the grave appearance of Mr. Bellegarde excluded the least suspicion. One said it was such a Duke, another such a Count, a third was positive that he was a prince of the blood. There were several whispered to those who stood next them, I know the harlequin very well, but having promised him upon my honour that I would not disclose his name, you must excuse me if I don't break my word. Harlequin all this time continued exercising his talents with great vivacity, danced with Madame Bellegarde, and in their turn with every lady in the room. This was by much the most agreeable entertainment of the whole night, as every body was alike satisfied, that is, alike deceived. His grand tour being made, harlequin came and placed himself by Madame Bellegarde who attacked him in a very lively manner, asked him to what theatre he belonged, and how many years he had practised his profession. He replied, that this was his proper stage, that like Don Quixote he had
long

long laid aside the ensigns of his order, and had never thought of resuming them more but to give her pleasure. "To give me pleasure, said the lady, laughing, I dare say you do not so much as know me," "that is very true," Madam, answered Harlequin, and yet I am your most intimate acquaintance." "Can there be any wit, Mr. Harlequin, returned the lady, where there is not truth, and where the whole of the behaviour is compounded of contradiction." "No, Madam, said Harlequin, I doubt whether with all your wit you could give the least colour of probability to such a position." The company forming a circle about them, the musick ceased for a quarter of an hour, and then the dancing was renewed with as much spirit as before.

When it grew towards morning the musick was dismissed, and they fell again into conversation, most of the company then unmasked, and pressed Harlequin extremely to follow their example, which he declined, alledging, that from the passport which gave him entrance, he conceived that every body was to do there as they pleased. Madame Bellegarde joined her solicitations in the warmest manner, but to no purpose. At length she whispered in his ear, "your obstinacy is so great, that I now hate you as much as I should have loved you, if in pulling off your mask you had discovered the face of the man, whom I esteem to have the most merit of any in the world." This struck Mr. Bellegarde to the heart, he saw plainly that merit only could move his wife, and as he knew that the gentleman who gave the ball had a great deal, he began to entertain
strong

strong suspicions. Yet this did not hinder him from proceeding still in his career with as much briskness and gaiety as any harlequin upon the stage, and said such shrewd things to every one that questioned him, that they laughed at each other's expence very heartily.

When it drew towards seven o'clock, the company began to disperse, so that in a little time there was nobody left, but Madame Bellegarde, and a relation of her's with the gentleman who gave the ball, and one of his relations, and as they proposed going to breakfast they grew weary of the harlequin, and this to such a degree, that Madame Bellegarde said with a pretty quick voice, " every thing has its season, " and therefore Signior Harlequin lay aside " that character with your mask, or go about " your business." " I shall go with those gentlemen, said he, who are my friends, or at " least, I shall stay till they go." " If we are " all friends, said the gentleman who gave the " ball, pull off your mask, or if not, take the " lady's advice and follow the rest of the company." " I shall neither unmask, replied " Harlequin, nor quit this place, for as Mr. " Bellegarde is among the number of my friends, " I have a mind to inspect a little into his lady's " conduct during his absence, and the rather " because she has taken it into her head to receive the compliment of a masquerade when " he is out of the way." Tho' he said this in a pleasant tone, and without any gesture that gave the least sign of anger, it stung his wife extremely.

Her eyes and her cheeks confessed the disorder of her heart, and without reflecting, she made

made him this answer. " A woman who is young
 " and not ugly, must pass through life in mi-
 " sery, if she is to give no part of her time to
 " her friends, but spend it wholly with her hus-
 " band, or as he directs, since, no doubt, hus-
 " bands claim the privilege of losing a few hours
 " now and then, without desiring the presence
 " of their wives." " Say you so, Madam, re-
 " plied harlequin, since I have learned the fun-
 " damental maxim of your morals, I need hear
 " no more. Adieu fair lady, gentlemen good
 " morrow."——Having said this, he turned
 upon his heel, and without waiting for the lady's
 answer tript out of the room, flourishing his
 wooden sword, preserving the true air of his
 character to the very last. The quickness of his
 expression, and the abruptness of his departure,
 put all thoughts of breakfast out of their heads.
 " Methinks, said one of the gentlemen, this
 " harlequin has the air of Mr. Bellegarde."
 " If so, continued the person who gave the ball,
 " I am afraid he will scarce take us for his
 " friends." " I am with more reason afraid,
 " added Madam Bellegarde, that my conduct
 " will inspire suspicions for which there is no
 " cause." " They say in Navarre, replied her
 " relation, that a merry night puts the next
 " morning in mourning. I am heartily sorry,
 " cousin, that I made one at this masquerade,
 " for notwithstanding his skipping and flourish-
 " ing, I am pretty well satisfied our harlequin
 " has not left us in the best temper."

With this sort of discourse they passed about
 an hour when Mr. Bellegarde entered the room,
 and after a turn or two came up to his lady,
 whom he addressed in these words. " In the

“ space, Madam, of twelve years that we have
“ lived together, I have shared with you all the
“ pleasures for which a woman of your sprightly
“ wit might be supposed to have a turn, and
“ never let slip any opportunity of procuring
“ them for you. I have carried you to ball
“ after ball, because I knew you were fond of
“ it, dancing never gave me much delight, yet
“ as I was sensible it gave you pleasure, I have
“ danced as much as if it had been the diversion I
“ most liked. I never did any thing without your
“ knowledge, I never made a secret to you of
“ where I went. You have deceived me first,
“ you know I hate a noise, let us part then
“ quietly and without disturbance. In reference
“ to a separate maintenance, I will give you
“ no cause to complain, but henceforward let
“ me beseech you not to think of seeing me
“ again. I have not been a husband who had
“ any pleasures to which I would not have my
“ wife a witness, and I cannot think of living
“ with a lady who conceives her wit and beauty
“ too great a treasure for one man to possess,
“ and who therefore is for dividing her time
“ between her husband and his friends. We
“ are now upon equal terms, Madame Belle-
“ garde, I have had your sentiments, and you
“ are now no stranger to mine. As we met in
“ joy let us part in peace.”

“ As to the conduct of Madame Bellegarde,
“ said the gentleman who gave the ball, there
“ has certainly been nothing in it that can jus-
“ tify such treatment, and as you have always
“ honoured us with the title of your friends, it
“ surprizes me very much that you should think
“ proper in our presence to make her such a com-
“ pliment.

“ pliment. We have known you both so well
 “ and so long, that we can scarce believe what we
 “ hear, or bring ourselves to imagine that the sa-
 “ tisfaction you have enjoyed for twelve years
 “ together, should not incline you to wish for its
 “ continuance, rather than lay hold on so slight
 “ and trivial an accident to relinquish it at once
 “ and for ever. Be advised, Sir, to review this
 “ matter coolly, and to reflect with yourself
 “ how little it corresponds with that reputation
 “ which you have for prudence, or that attach-
 “ ment which you profess to peace. If in con-
 “ sequence of our intreaties you will have the
 “ condescension to do this, either I am much
 “ mistaken, or you will see this innocent affair
 “ in another light, and your first resolution will
 “ give way to another that becomes you better,
 “ and you will not indulge a fit of the spleen
 “ so far as to let it deprive yourself and your
 “ lady of the title you have so well deserved,
 “ of being the happy couple.”

“ Dear husband, interrupted Madam Belle-
 “ garde, be so kind as to put on your harle-
 “ quin dress again, in which you were a hun-
 “ dred times more agreeable than in this. I
 “ can by no means think of parting from the
 “ pleasure I had in conversing with you in that
 “ shape, for those disagreeable ideas which in
 “ your present form you endeavour to inspire.
 “ Hear me now with the same patience that
 “ you did then, and if what I have to say does
 “ not give you entire satisfaction, you must
 “ e’en take what measures you think proper.
 “ I love you as well as it is possible to love a
 “ man, and was never guilty of so much as a
 “ thought that might offend you; you may be-

“ lieve me if you please, and perhaps my so-
“ lemn assertion ought to have as much weight
“ as your own suspicions. But notwithstanding
“ the tenderness of my affection, I have been
“ always under such a kind of awe in your pre-
“ sence, that I could never relish the pleasures
“ which, as you very truly say, you were always
“ ready to procure. I had a mind therefore to
“ try, whether the same diversion in which you
“ have often indulged me, would not be at-
“ tended with a different effect in your absence.
“ It was certainly an innocent, tho’ perhaps
“ an idle curiosity, but whatever it was, I chose
“ to indulge it with those who are your parti-
“ cular friends rather than others. All that
“ you can reproach me with in this foolish bu-
“ siness, amounts to no more than doing it
“ without your knowledge, and of that I have
“ given you the reason.

“ While I live I shall love you and you only,
“ not merely from duty, but because, without
“ flattery, you are the most amiable person I
“ know, and this whatever turn the present af-
“ fair may take. If my reasons are not satis-
“ factory so much the worse for you, sure I am
“ that they are very sincere, you have spoken
“ from twelve years experience, mine is of the
“ same date. But if after all you think it pro-
“ bable, that you may meet with a woman
“ who will have more complaisance and sub-
“ mission for you than I, let us separate, I con-
“ sent with all my heart ; but one thing more
“ let me add, that in pushing things to this
“ extremity, you will be certainly more un-
“ happy than I, because your suspicions will al-
“ ways give you pain, whereas, excepting the
“ point

“ point of your absence I shall remain just where
“ I was, being fully satisfied of my own innocence.”

“ Innocent or not innocent, Madam, said
“ Mr. Bellegarde, I shall live and die with you.
“ Whatever your foibles may be, your good
“ sense and good nature will forever secure the
“ heart of a man as honest, and as delicate as
“ any in France. Be pleased to let us go to
“ breakfast, and then name the day when I shall
“ be a harlequin again, whatever dress pleases
“ you most, I shall always think becomes me
“ best.” In fine, this simple business of a masquerade, after producing such a violent storm, caused no other shipwreck than that of Phillis, who was some time after discharged under another pretence. Mr. Bellegarde and his lady lived in as great felicity after as before, and maintained to the last day of their lives, to which perhaps this difference did not a little contribute, the character of the happy couple.

This is the whole of my story, which if it has not pleased, has at least not fatigued you. I observed before I began, that its simplicity was its greatest beauty, and if there be not something in it very affecting as well as instructive, it must be disfigured by my manner of relating. Be that as it will I am very confident, that in the transactions of the world, we shall meet with many family quarrels begun as foolishly, and ended more fatally; what surprizes me most is, that people should hope to live together for many years in any degree of amity, without condescending to each other's tempers; and tho' I cannot judge from experience, yet the little reason I have tells me, that true affection ought

to produce complaisance, which however, if we were to conclude from what we see, seems to be a doctrine not generally received, or at least not so generally as it deserves, since otherwise it would certainly prevent, not only a multitude of little quarrels, but even those that swell from trifling accidents into great ones.

Another observation that I have made is, that there cannot be a greater folly than to expect either pleasure or peace with a man who is deficient in understanding. Men of sense are as little free from foibles as fools, or if I conjecture right, let sense be ever so strong, there will be intervals when it is obscured. But then these will be short, and the warmth of a dispute will rekindle the light of reason. Whereas with the other sort of people the most prudent conduct in the world gives no security, and the most perfect innocence avails nothing in one's justification. A man of sense may mistake, or be too hasty in resenting a mistake, but upon a very little reflection, he will correct the one and forgive the other. A fool will blunder on from one mistake to another, and merely from want of comprehension will be stupidly obstinate in every one of his mistakes, which must quickly render him insupportable. There is a secret pleasure in submitting to a person, who we know will consider that submission as an obligation; but to submit like a slave, because one knows not how to escape, or to resist, is repugnant to human nature, and those who can do it, must have minds either very mean or very vicious. To bear ill usage with patience may be a virtue, but not of the highest kind; and only to seem to bear it, while in reality it makes no impression,

sion, must arise from motives that I do not chuse to name.

You may perhaps wonder at these reflections, but Mr. Pensive, who will to morrow atone for my failings, has so magnified the pleasures of these amusements, that I have for some weeks past read only to furnish me with subjects for reflection, and I either find or fancy there is nothing entertains the mind so much. In short, I am become fond of reasoning upon every thing, and like a young heir that grows covetous upon coming to an estate, I am so proud of being able to think, that the greatest mortification I have in the world, is to remember how many years I passed without thinking. It is possible, tho' indeed not very probable, that I may express my notions on this head better, or rather more tolerably, in poetry than in prose. If in this I conjecture right, my verse will be some excuse for my story, and if I should be out in both, you will at least have the goodness to consider them as the first essays of a person that has but just begun to exercise those talents bestowed upon her by nature, and that some time or other may make you amends for your present indulgence.

The LINNET.

*What art so sweetly care beguiles,
Or sooths if fickle fortune smiles,
As the soft pow'rs of song?
This bids the warmer passions rise,
Or fills with liquid grief our eyes,
Such charms to verse belong.*

K 4

But

But sure that lay doth most excel,
 That can the moral lesson tell,
 With unaffected ease,
 Can by its sounds assuage the sense,
 Convey advice without offence,
 Or teach reproof to please.

This let me try ——— A linnet gay,
 In gilded palace pass'd the day,
 In hopping, pruning, singing,
 Fond M I R A' S innocent delight,
 Who from the morning to the night,
 Was some new comfort bringing.

With flowers she deck'd her fav'rites cage,
 She listned to his tuneful rage,
 As on her hand she bore,
 A silver draw'r did seed supply,
 His drink in chrystal fountain by,
 What would a linnet more ?

No state could happier be than this,
 Yet birds sometimes mistake their blifs,
 He pin'd to leave his home,
 Tempted by the delightful scene,
 Of silver streams and meadows green,
 He quits his wir'y dome.

For freedom thus discarding fear,
 His wanton pinnions beat the air,
 With joy his bosom thrill'd.
 But soon the birds our stranger peck,
 The evening too grew wet and bleak,
 And all his rapture chill'd.

Hopeless

Hopeless he hov' red up and down,
 Until by chance propitious thrown,
 Where hung his cage in sight,
 The worth of safety now he knew,
 So back with eager haste he flew,
 And sweetly pass'd the night.

Next morn e're *MIRA* left her bed,
 While busy dreams disturb'd her head,
 Where thought began to spring,
 The tuneful wandrer stretch'd his throat,
 And warbling forth his sweetest note,
 He sung or seem'd to sing.

" When from our proper good we range,
 " Meer madness is the love of change,
 " Since fools can ne'er be free,
 " Wild wishes always end in woe,
 " True pleasure is our bliss to know,
 " Content gives liberty."

MIRA tho' sprightly gay and young,
 Admir'd, approv'd, her linnets song,
 Transferr'd it to her life,
 Her beau she dropp'd, she chang'd her plan,
 Wedded a plain but honest man,
 And made a prudent wife.

Bless me, said lady Constantia! all my girls
 are becoming philosophers. I thought it a little
 strange in Charlotte and Calista, but in Henri-
 etta it is still more surprizing. The other two
 went but a very little beyond narrative, but this
 damsel affects so much wisdom, that if we did
 not live in a protestant country, I should think

her in danger of taking sanctuary in a nunnery. You need not blush, Henrietta, you may be sure I have so much of the mother in me, as not to see many of the imperfections there may be in your story, and in your observations, and if I was not afraid of making you vain, I should tell you that some things I should scarce have expected from you with all your thinking. But beware of pushing this matter too far. In order to live in this world, we must in some measure act and speak like other people, and how acceptable soever the turn of your discourse may be amongst your friends here in the little parlour, take my word for it, that a freer stile and less elevated thoughts, will do you more credit in common conversation. If you set up for reasoning and reflecting at every turn, one sex will think you mad, and the other be afraid of your making them so. Take it from me, child, that most men have as strong an aversion to wisdom in a wife, as you seem to have for weakness in a husband, and perhaps after all they are not much in the wrong, since to affect wisdom is to conceal ambition.

This appears to me, Madam, said Sir Lawrence, an excellent observation, for methinks, to desire wisdom is to desire to govern, and as you say men who don't care to be govern'd, will think that no very amiable quality in a wife. Yet, let me tell you, Miss Henrietta's story pleases me much, and her reflections more, she has stated the notion of submission in a true light, and if she practises her doctrine but half as well as she preaches, the man will be very happy that has her ; and I think she could not lay down a better rule for securing her own happiness,

happinefs, than to refolve not to marry a fool. But let me tell you one thing, Henrietta, there are a fort of creatures more troublefome than fools, and thofe are wits. Whatever you do child, never marry a wit. Thy fenfe and his whims will never agree, he will think a sparkling jeft infinitely beyond your folid obfervations, and not being able to convince will ufe his utmoft endeavours to confound thee. I know very well, that men of fenfe feldom want wit, but I know too from many years experience, that men who fet up for wits are very feldom bleffed with fenfe. Believe me, Henrietta, if Mr. Bellegarde had been a wit, his lady's apology had never brought about a reconciliation. He would have been fo dreadfully afraid of being outwitted, that he would have chofen a feparation as the only chance for maintaining his fuperiority. In fhort, wit has a keen edge, and folly a blunt one, but they are both dangerous weapons.

Henrietta has been fo great a favourite of mine, faid Olivia, from the time I firft faw her, that I could fcarce have fufpected ſhe could attract ftill more of my efteem; and tho' I think the cautions that your ladyſhip gave her, are in themſelves very juſt, yet that ſprightlineſs which ſhines in her ordinary converſation is fo conspicuous, that one need be in no pain for the confequences of her more ſerious thoughts; on the other hand it gives one great ſatisfaction to perceive, that with all this livelineſs and vivacity, there is a mixture alſo of ſolidity. For my own part, I take it for granted, that ſhe is very ſincere in the account ſhe gave us of her progreſs in thinking, and I do not at all wonder that one

who thinks so well should be inclined to think much. Those indeed, who fancy women made only for amusement, and who have an unreasonable jealousy, that inclines them to exclude us, if they could, from the rank of rational beings, may be offended, because they are afraid when a woman takes this turn ; but a man of sense will certainly encourage it. Such a man will wish to have a companion in a wife ; and what sort of a companion must she be, who never thinks, or thinks but seldom ? Sir Lawrence has distinguished justly, fools and wits have naturally this kind of jealousy, which a man of parts, because he is so, despises.

The compliment, added Mr. Pensive, that Miss Henrietta has made me, belongs rather to my friend Beaumont, whom I consider as the original inventor of these evening entertainments, which, as that fair lady observed, have undoubtedly been of great use to some of us, by producing such a spirit of reflection, as hath enabled us to improve considerably the lights derived from reason and experience. These were the thoughts that I communicated to the lady, who would do me the honour of passing for my pupil ; and what excellent effects they have had upon her mind, this assembly has seen and approved. Upon this head give me leave to remark, that as hitherto most of our diversions have been calculated to please the senses, chiefly those of seeing and hearing, it is no great wonder that they have been so generally regarded in an indifferent light, by such as have had the dignity of human nature chiefly in view, and which they had great reason to think, might be improved in this way better than in any other. Our


attempt has succeeded so well, in respect to the younger members of this small society, that I make no question, if these kind of amusements were introduced now and then instead of chit-chat or gaming, they would contribute not a little to extend the genius, amend the heart, and correct the manners of young people; which is the only certain and adequate method of extirpating that dangerous humour, of turning all things serious into ridicule, and leaving us no better guide in our affairs than self-interest; no better standard for our pleasures, than the whims of those who find their account in them, and who by making it their business to provide for other people's diversions, owe their subsistence to folly, and labour all they can to promote it.

Mr. Pensive, interrupted Beaumont, does me a great deal of honour, at the same time that he is so modest as to divest himself of what is really his due; but as these little personal points, and this turn to consider even our amusements in a very serious light, may possibly be carried so far, as to diminish that pleasure we take in them; my motion shall be to adjourn till to-morrow night, when my friend will have an opportunity of justifying this sublime doctrine, by giving us such a relation as may naturally lead us to those improvements which himself and his pupil have so well described, and which we cannot but own are things of importance.



T H E
Progress of V I C E ;
O R, T H E
UNNATURAL PARENT.

A
True History from the SPANISH.

 H E piece I am about to give you, said Mr. Pensive, had occupied my thoughts, before I had the least expectation of conversing with Mr. Anguish, otherwise I should not have presumed to meddle with a Spanish story before this audience, and more especially in the presence of one so much better acquainted with the language and manners of that nation than myself. As this must appear a reasonable apology, for a thing that might otherwise have been liable to misconstruction ; so upon second thoughts, I conceive, that this gentleman's censure of the relation, that I have ventured to copy from the works of a learned lady, will enable you to form a true judgment as to the veracity of the facts contained,

tained, as well as of the merit of the piece itself; and having thus premised, what appeared to me requisite to secure your candid reception of a little work that has cost me some pains; I shall without farther ceremony, proceed to my narrative, with a full assurance, that how melancholy soever the subject may be, as abounding with sanguinary scenes, and big with a variety of sad events; yet it will be found to convey many valuable moral lessons, and afford us a just picture of the ill consequences that attend such prejudices, as become general in any nation, let their temper and notions of honour be what they will.

The large and fruitful province of Andalusia, while in the hands of the Moors, was divided into no less than three kingdoms, Jayen, Cordova, and Seville. The city of Jayen, which was the capital of the first, is far from being large, yet is adorned with many good convents and fair churches; and has also a very beautiful square. The situation is very agreeable, being well watered, enjoying a pure and wholesome air, and surrounded on all sides by a fertile and pleasant country. We need not wonder therefore, that with these advantages, it is well peopled, or that abundance of persons of distinction should make it the place of their residence. Amongst these was Don Pedro, descended from one of the most illustrious families in the province; but as my author conceals his surname, it is not in my power to supply the defect. This nobleman having been married about five years, became then a widower, and continued so during the remaining part of his life. His deceased spouse left him two children, in
character

character, the most opposite to each other that can be imagined. The son Don Alphonso was of a sour and sullen disposition, in which he much resembled his father, and from thence became his favourite. The daughter, Donna Mencía, retained the virtues of her mother, and being of a gentle, humane and courteous behaviour, drew upon herself the aversion of Don Pedro, by those very qualities that rendered her amiable in the eyes of all the world besides.

The father, who had nothing in view but raising a considerable establishment for his son, destined the young lady to a convent, that she might not enjoy any part of his estate. However, as Donna Mencía had beauty, wit, and good sense, she was far from finding every body in the same sentiments with her father; on the contrary, some of the worthiest persons in the city would have esteemed themselves happy in having her for a wife; but Don Pedro being determined to have no son-in-law, declared upon all occasions, that the young lady was absolutely disgusted with the world, and had taken a positive resolution to pass her life in a monastery. Yet notwithstanding the whole city were well enough apprised of this, there was a young gentleman, whose name was Don Henriquez, who was so captivated by the charms of Donna Mencía, that he could not avoid cherishing the desire of paying his addresses to her, or banish from his mind the hopes of making her one day his consort. The passions of love and hope are inseparable; and as the former may be said to add wings to the latter, so a multitude of instances prove, that with this assistance, love surmounts those obstacles, from whence it would be otherwise

otherwise precipitated into the gulph of despair, thence never to rise again.

This Don Henriquez came, while a boy, with his father to Jayen from Granada, in which kingdom, though his chief possessions lay, yet the old man liked the province of Andalusia better, for its beauty, fertility, wholsomeness, and many other reasons. Amongst these, perhaps one might be the means of educating his son properly, with respect to which he was so careful, and the genius of Don Henriquez corresponded so well with the assiduity of his tutors, that he was looked upon as one of the most accomplished cavaliers in that city. These qualifications joined to a fine person, and the prospect of a fair estate, his father having no other child, made him well received among the ladies, there being few families, in which with so many advantages he might not have match'd with ease. As he was sensible enough of this, and was besides very intimate with Don Alphonso, he flattered himself, notwithstanding the treatment others had met with, that he should obtain a fair reception, on the score of friendship at least, if not from the regard that was elsewhere paid to his circumstances.

But in this he was most egregiously deceived; for besides that general reason, which had given an exclusion to other young gentlemen, there was a particular motive that operated to his prejudice with invincible force. Don Pedro picqued himself upon the antiquity of his family, and all the riches in the universe could never have tempted him to think of an unequal alliance. He knew that notwithstanding their present affluence, the gentility of Henriquez was but of one

one descent, his grandfather being a farmer, and though honest industry had been the sole instrument in acquiring their wealth, yet Don Henriquez would never have obtained his daughter, even if he could have been brought to alter his intention of shutting her up in a cloister. When therefore that gentleman had prevailed upon a person to mention his intentions to Don Pedro; the answer he received was of such a nature, as plainly shewed, that no hopes were to be expected on that side; but as he was likewise informed of the true scheme which that surly old man pursued; and that one of the fairest ladies in Andalusia was to be sacrificed to the raising a fortune for such a brute as Don Alphonso; he began to consider the thing in another light, and as is the custom of lovers, apprehended it promised more facility.

Don Henriquez conceived, that as Donna Mencia must be probably but little inclined to execute her part in this project, it might be no difficult thing, to prevail upon her to wave her father's consent to her marriage, more especially, if the person who made his addressee, was in a condition to protect her from the resentments of her father and brother, and had a fortune sufficient to maintain her in a manner suitable to her quality. This point being determined in his own favour, for he knew that his father loved him too well to disapprove his choice, and had interest enough to defend him in an affair, where the honour was on his side, he resolved to proceed on this plan, being well enough satisfied with the loss of her fortune, if by that means he could procure a lady of so much merit. The first step he took was attended

tended with all the success he could desire; for upon shewing a small purse of pistoles to a valet of Don Pedro's, who constantly attended his daughter, when she was permitted to go to church; he made no scruple of promising to deliver a letter into her hands, which Don Henriquez thereupon immediately put into his, and which was conceived in the following terms.

I am sensible how great temerity there is in daring to let you know that you are beloved, because it is impossible for any one to deserve you. Nevertheless, if a passion of a very singular kind, may in some measure compensate the want of merit, I hope you will not utterly condemn mine: I sounded the intentions of Don Pedro, before I ventured upon this address, and he caused me to be informed, that you were absolutely bent upon retiring from the world; I am somewhat at a loss to comprehend, that these are your true sentiments; and should be glad to know from yourself, what I ought to think of this matter. If I guess right, that there is a constraint put upon your inclinations, and you will allow me to free you from so tyrannic an authority; I have a fortune sufficient to console you for that loss which may accompany your father's displeasure. Be pleased to reflect on the proposition I make you; remember the obedience you owe Don Pedro has its proper limits, and that it will be better for you to vanquish those scruples, which the nicety of your virtue may suggest, in prejudice to what I propose, than to make yourself unhappy for the remaining part of your life. You may safely confide your answer to the person who delivers you this billet.

Donna Mencia read this letter over and over, without being able to determine what step she ought to take: the valet, whom Don Henriquez had

had gained, perceiving plainly her irresolution, took the liberty of setting forth the character of her lover in the brightest colours that his pencil could suggest ; representing to her at the same time, with so much address, that if she let slip this opportunity of escaping out of that servitude, in which she was held by her father, nothing could prevent her being shut up in a convent : she consented at length to a private interview with Don Henriquez, that they might take proper measures ; and in order to this, she wrote him such an answer as seemed to her expedient, without making any absolute promise. The place of their meeting was at a window, in a back parlour, which looked into a street little frequented, and the time when the family were in their first sleep. After several interviews, without any unlucky accident, she consented to receive a promise of marriage from her lover, in the presence of the valet Gonzalez, and her own woman, whom she singly entrusted with this dangerous affair. But notwithstanding all that Don Henriquez could say, she could not be prevailed on to think of making her escape, till she was thoroughly satisfied, her father meant to force her upon taking the veil. A precaution, which how necessary soever the purity of her virtue might make it appear, was very nigh costing them both their lives.

Before Don Henriquez had fixed his affections upon this young lady, he was drawn into an intrigue with one Clavella, who being entirely her own mistress, he visited with little restraint till the commencement of this amour made him an entire stranger. As this conduct was by no means convenient to that damsel, who had frequently

quently experienced his generosity, she bore it with very little patience; and the fertility of her imagination quickly suggested the true reason; in order to be at the bottom of which, she caused him to be followed by a girl, upon whose dexterity and discretion she could depend. The consequence was, that she understood Don Henriquez went almost every night to confer with Donna Mencia, in the manner that has been before described; and as she was well enough acquainted with the character of that young lady, she readily discerned, that this was an affair of honour, and that Don Henriquez was not to be recovered. She determined therefore to break this match at all events, even though it should be attended with the destruction of her lover and her rival; yet for her own sake, she resolved to make one great effort before she had recourse to extremities. She sent therefore such a message, as prevailed upon Don Henriquez to make her a visit, in which, after trying prayers, intreaties, and tears in vain; she at length proceeded to threatnings, in general terms, however, as if no woman could be safe, who presumed to rob her of her prize; but even this had no effect, Don Henriquez took it for the last artifice of a creature of her kind, and treated it with scorn, believing his secret so well kept that he had nothing to fear.

Clavella, from the moment he left her, breathed nothing but vengeance, and it very unfortunately fell out, that she had this but too much in her power; amongst the rest of her acquaintance, there was a certain woman of rank, who had an only daughter, to whom she gave more liberty than was fit, in consequence of her own
conduct

conduct being none of the most correct. At this lady's house Clavella had sometimes met with Don Alphonso, who was very desirous of being admitted into her favour ; but before she lost Don Henriquez, she held him in the highest contempt ; but now considering that he was the brother of Donna Mencia, and the fittest instrument in the world to execute her resentment, she altered her behaviour, and treated him with much complaisance. This had the desired effect ; brought him more frequently to the house of that lady, and by degrees taught him the way to visit Clavella at home. When she had thoroughly studied his temper, and knew exactly how to manage it at her pleasure, she contrived in her own mind the perpetration of that barbarous scheme ; which as nothing but a vicious heart could suggest, so without abandoning herself to the most hardened wickedness, it was impossible she should have proceeded to the execution of, and yet she did it, not only with all the cunning and art, but with all the gaiety and presence of mind, that she could have shewn in the most innocent or laudable action.

One day, having met with him at the house of the lady before-mentioned, and the discourse turning on the prudence of marrying daughters while they were young, to prevent their making matches of their own heads ; she addressed herself on a sudden to Don Alphonso, and asked him very briskly, whether he had thought of this expedient, to prevent his sister's giving him a brother-in-law, without taking his advice. Don Alphonso answered gravely, that he believed his sister understood her duty better, and had more respect for those, whose consent it was
fit

fit she should obtain; that besides she was too young to have any such inclinations, and that at a proper season they intended to put her into a convent, being determined that she should lead a life of religion. "Alas! alas! cried Clavella, how easy the wisest men are made dupes; if you trust to that, I dare pronounce, you will find yourselves mistaken: it is an old and true saying, that one knows the least of what passes in one's own family; take it from me, Don Alphonso, if you don't chuse a husband for Donna Mencia, and that speedily, she will chuse one for herself; for it would be doing great injustice to so fair a character, to suspect that she has any other design in her complaisance for Don Henriquez. She is a lady too well born, and too well educated, to entertain a cavalier every night at a window, if she was not inclined to become his wife."

Alphonso, beast as he was, had too great a respect for his sister to swallow this story hastily. "I perceive, said he, that you have been told Don Henriquez comes to our house sometimes, but I can assure you, that he visits me, and that my apartment is at so great distance from my sister's, that it is simply impossible he should have any correspondence with her; and besides we keep so strict an eye upon her motions, that what you mention is certainly a thing that never happened." Upon this the rest of the company burst into a loud laugh. "For my part, resumed Clavella, I have no sort of concern about Don Henriquez, and care not a straw what measures he takes; but the tender regard I have for your interest and honour, makes me hear with impatience the
"turn

“ turn that people give to this affair. The gal-
 “ lantry of this spark is so public, that all the
 “ neighbourhood takes notice of it, and will
 “ needs have it, that your father cannot but
 “ know it, but dissembles his knowledge ; that
 “ Donna Mencia may provide herself a good
 “ husband, without laying him under the ne-
 “ cessity of putting his hand in his purse. All
 “ this may be prudent enough, but in my
 “ simple opinion, if you have any such scheme,
 “ the sooner it is executed the better, in order
 “ to stop people’s mouths ; for when the wings
 “ of scandal are once feathered, there is nobody
 “ can say how far it may fly.

Don Alphonso was so alarmed at this instance
 of levity in his sister, that he was not able to
 bring out a word in reply, and all who were
 present, instead of endeavouring to mitigate his
 passion, laboured to irritate him, if it had been
 possible, still more. He left them with fire in
 his eyes and vengeance in his heart. The first
 thing he did was to acquaint his father, who
 persuaded him to dissemble his sentiments, till a
 favourable opportunity should offer of revenging
 the insult Don Henriquez had done them, in
 presuming to think of matching with their family,
 without considering the meanness of his own.
 In about a month’s time, Don Pedro received
 advice of the arrival of the galleons at Seville,
 and that they had begun to debark their rich
 cargo, in which he had a large concern. He
 set out therefore for that city with Gonfalez,
 and three other servants, leaving nobody to at-
 tend Don Alphonso but a page. In the mean
 time, this angry brother had taken care to watch
 the parlour window in an evening, and had
 been

been witness to the interviews between Don Henriquez and his sister more than once. That gentleman was not altogether free from apprehensions, arising from the difference he observed in Don Alphonso's behaviour, but very unfortunately flattered himself, that in case of a discovery, they might prevent things from coming to extremities, by asserting they were privately married, which considering that nobody had a better fortune in the city than himself, would, as he fancied, divert the storm.

As soon as Don Alphonso had, by letters from his father, understood that he was in possession of the wealth he went to receive, he prepared to execute without delay that execrable design which had been concerted between them. Donna Mencia on the other hand, perceiving that her brother treated her worse than usual, determined to lay hold of her father's absence, to escape out of a house, where she led the life of a slave. One afternoon therefore, when she saw her brother was retired to his apartment, she went into the parlour, where she used to converse with Don Henriquez, which lay immediately behind it, and sat down to write a letter to her lover, enjoining him not to fail coming the night following, since she was resolved not to let this opportunity pass. Don Alphonso, who was upon the watch, saw her writing, and suffered her to fold her letter; but just as she was going to seal it, he rushed in and took it from her.

She would have excused herself, but he who would not hear a single word, retired hastily, locking the door behind him; having already secured her maid and the cook in separate rooms;

and sent out his page on a message to a distant part of the town ; the next thing he did, was to go himself to a priest, who had been formerly his tutor, whom he desired to come along with him to confess a person that was at the point of death. The poor man innocently made all the haste he could. As soon as they came to the house, Don Alphonso introduced him into the room where his sister was, told him, that she was the person he came to confess, who merited death, and who should suffer it, as soon as she was in a fit condition. The ecclesiastic endeavoured to pacify him, and to represent the blackness of the crime he was about to commit. Don Alphonso, with his usual brutality, answered, that if he would not confess her, he might go about his business ; that he did not want his advice ; and that his sister's crime was of a nature that in his opinion nothing could expunge but her blood.

The priest seeing the obstinacy of Don Alphonso, and his cruel resolution, sat down in a chair, and caused Donna Mencia to fall upon her knees before him, and when he had heard her innocent confession, he made a second attempt, intimating that there was not the least colour of justice, in proceeding to take away his sister's life, merely because she had thoughts of taking a husband without his consent. He would also have represented, that providence could not suffer an action of this kind to sleep, but would repay his want of pity towards his own flesh and blood, by withholding mercy from him, when he most needed it. Don Alphonso cut him short in the midst of his discourse, and bid him be gone that instant, with a strict charge not

not to utter a syllable of what he had seen or heard, if he was inclined to spend any more time in the land of the living. The poor man frightened with these threatnings, got out of the house as soon as it was possible, and dreading what might happen, mentioned not a word of what had passed upon this melancholy occasion.

He was no sooner withdrawn, than Don Alphonso seized his sister by the throat, stabbed her thrice into the bosom with his poignard, and leaving her swimming in her own blood upon the floor, quitted the room, locking the door behind him, but without taking out the key. He then returned to his own apartment, where he waited for his page, and as soon as he came in, gave him his sister's letter, which he ordered him to carry to Don Henriquez, directing him to bring his answer to him at the house of Clavella's friend, and if he did not find him there, to wait till he arrived. This done, he retired to the house of one of his companions, who was much of his own temper in every respect; in order to remain there till the hour of Don Henriquez's coming to the parlour window, big with the thoughts of compleating his revenge, by sending the lover after his mistress. In the mean time the page carried the billet to Don Henriquez, who gave him for answer, that he would not fail to be at the place at the time mentioned in the note. Upon which the page withdrew, and went immediately to the lady's before-mentioned, in order to wait for his master, as he had commanded.

When Don Henriquez had time to reflect, he could not help thinking it a little strange, that he should receive this letter by the page, since

from the time of Don Pedro's departure, he had never heard from his mistress but by her woman, who was the only person trusted hitherto with the secret ; yet notwithstanding the diffidence and uneasiness this gave him, he remained fixed in his design of keeping his word, being satisfied it was his mistress's hand ; and conceiving therefore he ought not to entertain any suspicions, that a person so dear to him would have any concern in an invitation that might expose him to danger. But his mind for all this was far from being at rest, and he could not help feeling a kind of impatience till he should be at the bottom of this mystery, which, with all his penetration and sagacity, it was impossible for him to unravel. The moment therefore that the clock struck eleven, which was the usual hour of their meeting, when all Don Pedro's family was gone to bed, he quitted his own house, but had the precaution to take with him a good sword and a case of pistols, that whatever happened he might be able to make a stout defence.

As soon as he came into the back street, and had advanced over-against the window, he perceived that it was shut, which surprised him not a little. He then drew nearer and made the usual signal, but nobody answered. Upon this he looked carefully about him, and not perceiving any person in the street, he with some difficulty clambered up the side of the buttress, which supported the wall, till he was high enough to push the window with his hand ; this flying open, discovered Donna Mencia, lying as her brother left her, which almost frightened him to death. He was scarce got down again, and
had

had set his feet upon the ground, before he was attack'd by three men, all of them well armed. Though he was still under the utmost terror from what he had seen, he defended himself notwithstanding with the utmost intrepidity, and quickly laid the two friends of Don Alphonso at his feet, by the assistance of his pistols. Upon this, Don Alphonso finding himself alone, and hard pushed, thought proper to retreat with as much speed as possible. At this very instant, the Corregidore, attended by a guard of archers, was coming by, and finding Don Henriquez with his sword in his hand drawn and bloody, and two men dying near him, caused him to be instantly seized; but when he had heard the truth from his own mouth, which was also confirmed by the last words of one of those who were expiring, he directed his guards to force a passage into the house of Don Pedro, where they found his daughter not yet dead, and thereupon sent for a surgeon, who gave her all the assistance in his power, while Don Henriquez's wounds were bound up by one of his pages; the Corregidore having released the two women servants, directed them to put their mistress to bed, leaving Don Henriquez with two of his archers in the house, to protect her, in case Don Alphonso should make a second attempt to compleat his horrid design.

That cruel brother, who was afraid of being arrested, retired as fast as possible to the lady's house, where he met with his page; he spent his time there for a week with Clavella, so closely concealed, that the Corregidore could not gain the least intelligence, and at the end of that space, set out one morning very early for

Seville, with a very large sum in gold, besides jewels to an immense value, which he brought away with him from his father's house. As he left his page asleep at his departure, so the boy was no sooner acquainted with it, when he awaked, than he went and put himself into the hands of justice, and gave a distinct account of all he knew. Upon this the lady, Clavella, and the lady's daughter were apprehended; but as nothing more could be proved against them, than that they had given shelter to Don Alphonso, after he had assassinated his sister, they escaped all punishment, except a few months imprisonment. As for Donna Mencia, when she recovered of her wounds, which thro' her youth and the vigour of her constitution, was sooner than could have been expected, she was with great solemnity espoused to Don Henriquez, and by the decree of justice, was immediately put into possession of the effects and estates as well of Don Pedro as of Don Alphonso. Instead therefore of coming to him a beggar, Donna Mencia brought her lover a very considerable fortune; the most distinguished families in Jayen went to pay their complements of congratulation to the new married couple, who after having run through so many misfortunes were perfectly happy in each other, and by their piety, prudence and other amiable qualities, made themselves daily more and more esteemed.

But in order to compleat this history, by shewing what a quick progress is made in vice, and how wicked men proceed from one detestable action to another, till by degrees they fill up the measure of their iniquity, and fall a vic-
tim

tim to their crimes, it is necessary to attend this unnatural brother, after his flight from Jayen to Seville, to which city he repaired, to render his father an account, how far he had executed the bloody orders he had given him. He remained there but two days, having in that short space received intelligence, that he had been condemned for contumacy, for not putting himself into the hands of justice, and was sentenced to lose his head. He went therefore, by the advice of his father to Barcelona, and embarked there on board the gallies, which were on the point of sailing for Naples, the place which was judged most convenient for his retreat, and where with the assistance of money and good recommendations, he might pass his time agreeably enough, till either Don Pedro should be able to obtain for him his grace, or take some other method to gain him a proper establishment, which continued to be what it had always been, the fixed object of his endeavours, and to which he was now more strongly excited than ever, by an action which would certainly have rendered Don Alphonso odious in the eyes of any parent, whose passions had not been as violent, and of the same cruel and vindictive nature with his own.

His voyage to Naples was as speedy and as prosperous as he could wish ; he carried with him a large sum in bills of exchange ; his recommendations procured him a favourable reception from the Viceroy ; and his regular remittances from Seville, afforded him as much credit as he could desire. As there is no city in Europe, where people in general live more voluptuously, Don Alphonso was charmed with his

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residence,

residence, and with that variety of pleasures which he enjoyed without controul. His days were spent in mirth and feasting, his evenings at play, and his nights in such places as his companions introduced him to, with ladies of the same character as Clavella. Amongst his intimates, none had his confidence so much, or indeed deserved it so well, as one Marco Antonio, who wore the habit of an abbe, but without the least title to it, not having so much as the tonsure. He was a man of family, had received a good education, which with quick parts, and a thorough knowledge of the vices of Naples, made him a compleat debauchee, and a fit companion for Don Alphonso. They were in a manner inseparable ; constantly of the same parties ; frequenting the same houses ; had but one purse at play, and assisted each other in their respective quarrels.

One day as they were walking together in a great street, Don Alphonso cast his eyes by chance on a beautiful young woman, who happened to be at a window, and very earnestly requested of his friend, to know who she was. Antonio very readily informed him, that her name was Donna Anna, that she was the youngest of five daughters, of whom the two eldest retired into a convent, because a clap of thunder had fallen between them, without doing either of them the least hurt ; that the two next were married to captains of the garrison, to whom they brought no other fortune than their beauty, their father having died in bad circumstances, and that Donna Anna resided with her grandfather, Don Fernand Dagnasco a Spaniard, who had very considerable employments in the army.

Don

Don Alphonso became strongly enamoured of this amiable person, more especially, after he had learned from other hands, that she was like to be a very rich heiress, her grandfather having amassed an immense fortune, which he proposed to leave her at his decease. Don Alphonso therefore put in practice all the methods of making court to her, usual in that city, and more especially serenades, but without effect, for Donna Anna being a young lady of the strictest virtue, gave him not the least encouragement, so that our Spaniard could not help wearing in his aspect very conspicuous marks of that chagrin which afflicted his heart.

For some days Marco Antonio took no notice of this, but at length he addressed him in these terms. “ Though I have reason, said he, Don Alphonso, to look upon the mystery you have made of this new passion, as a behaviour utterly inconsistent with our friendship ; yet I am so much concerned to see you uneasy, that I cannot help telling you, if you will follow my advice, you shall within a few weeks have Donna Anna in your arms. But in the first place, I must be assured, that your designs are honourable ; for though her father was poor, yet being a knight of St. Jago, she has such a sense of the honour due to her birth, and has been besides so virtuously educated, that if your views go no farther than having her for a mistress, you may waste your money and your time for years together, to no more purpose than you have done already. On the other hand, if you intend to make her your wife, and are content to take her without a fortune at present, I know the grandfather’s

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“ temper

“ temper so well, that it would be no difficult
 “ thing to bring about the match ; neither am I
 “ less positive, that when the old man comes to
 “ die, who is already in an advanced age, you
 “ will be amply paid for your patience.” “ Be
 “ assured, returned Don Alphonso, that my
 “ passion for Donna Anna is precisely what
 “ you would have it, and therefore, without
 “ taking amiss that foolish secrecy which I have
 “ hitherto kept, from I know not what motive,
 “ afford me this instance of your friendship and
 “ address, and you may depend upon my gra-
 “ titude to the last hour of my life.” Upon
 this declaration, Antonio repeated his promise,
 adding at the same time, that it should not be
 many days before he received a convincing proof
 of the sincerity of his attachment, and of his
 interest with the grandfather of his mistress.

He was in this respect as good as his word, for
 he had really a great influence over the mind of
 Don Fernand, and represented to him with so
 much force, the noble descent and the great
 fortune that Don Alphonso would have upon
 his father's decease, that the old Spaniard, who
 loved nothing better than Donna Anna, except
 his money, consented that Don Alphonso should
 be admitted to pay his respects to the young
 lady, and in the space of little more than a month
 the marriage was concluded, and solemnized
 with great splendour. In a few days after, Don
 Alphonso received a considerable bill of exchange
 from his father, which enabled him to furnish
 very handsomely an apartment in Don Fernand's
 house, and to purchase new cloaths and jewels
 for his wife, suitable to her quality, and even be-
 yond her grandfather's expectations. All things

seemed now in a prosperous situation. Don Alphonso looked upon himself as the happiest man in the world; testified his gratitude to his friend in a very generous manner; behaved towards Don Fernand with all imaginable respect, and was so fond of his wife, that he seemed to be entirely cured of that vicious disposition that had hitherto rendered him in a manner unfit for civil society. This calm however did not continue long, for when he least expected it, a storm arose that entirely shipwrecked his fortune.

He had so just an idea of the inflexible obstinacy of his father's temper, that he was very desirous of concealing his marriage, notwithstanding that it was in all respects equivalent to any thing to which he could pretend, even setting aside that barbarous fact, for which he had been obliged to abandon Spain: but as there are in all places busy bodies, that neglect their own to meddle in other people's affairs, so it was not long before Don Pedro heard of his son's nuptials from all quarters; upon which he wrote him a letter full of rage and resentment, telling him, that he had dishonoured his family in so high a degree, as to lose all title to calling him father; that if he had him in his power, he would shew him the same tenderness and mercy that he had shewn his sister; but that as he had not, the last testimony he should give him of his sentiments was by this declaration, that he should never receive a piece of eight more from him; that he would dispose of his affairs in such a manner, that he should be no more the better for them after his death than while living, since he had rather consume his wealth amongst sharp-

ers, at cards and dice, and die himself in indigence, than leave a fortune to the children of Donna Anna.

It might be imagined, from the strange contents of this epistle, that so much vehemence could not have been attended with any degree of constancy ; but it happened quite otherwise, for Don Pedro adhered as steadily to this causeless and cruel resolution, as if it had been the worthiest and best founded in the world. In consequence of this, Don Alphonso found himself very speedily in a situation the most unhappy that could be, without money, without credit, and without resource. As he looked upon his wife as the sole cause of this dreadful change in his circumstances, he began to treat her first coldly, and then coarsely, which the unhappy young lady resented no otherwise, than by beseeching him in the most humble manner, and with a profusion of tears, to inform her, what offence she had given him, and what could be the spring of this strange alteration in his behaviour. Don Alphonso did not leave her long in the dark ; but after shewing her his father's letter, asked her, what other usage she could expect from a husband she had made miserable ?

After coming to this explication, Don Alphonso thought himself not obliged to keep any further terms with his wife, but treated her daily worse and worse ; sold her jewels first, her linnen next, and brought her at last into so low a condition, that after dismissing her servants, she was obliged to dress her own food, and would very frequently have had none to dress, if her grandmother's servant, who was married to a tradesman in the city, had not afforded her the utmost
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supplies

supplies in her power, and even gone beyond it. At length, Marco Antonio, whose affairs suffered not a little from his friend's distress, as he had shared with him in the time of his prosperity, suggested to him, that the only means to set things to rights, was to get rid of his wife, in which he offered him his assistance. It is not a little amazing, that men of birth and quality, who from their tender years are usually instructed in principles of honour, virtue, and religion, should be capable of effacing them, to a degree that is scarce discernible, even among the dregs of mankind. But so it is, that a long habit of vice extinguishes all noble sentiments, and at length roots out the very sense of shame, which is the last defence against the vilest and the most infamous actions. These are reflections that ought instantly to fill the mind upon the first temptation to whatever is contrary to probity and a fair character; for when once a digression is made from thence, the progress downward is precipitate, and to re-ascend, becomes immediately difficult, in a little time impossible.

The count de Lemos, having finished the space for which he was appointed Viceroy of Naples, embarked on board the gallies for Spain, to make room for the duke de Ossuna, who was to succeed him. Don Alphonso asked his wife, the evening before, if she had not a mind to go to the port, in order to see the Viceroy's departure. Donna Anna, surprised and pleased at this proposition, accepted it with joy, and having locked her chamber door, put the key in her pocket, and went to give her grandmother notice, desiring her not to let the great gate be fastened, that they might not be obliged to disturb the
family

family at their return. The servant, who happened to be then with the old lady, dissuaded her from letting Donna Anna go out at so unseasonable an hour, and which was so totally repugnant to the usage of the country. But the good lady replied, that being in the company of her husband, no scandal could arise, and she saw nothing that she had to fear, and Donna Anna being gone, she retired to her own apartment at the other end of the house, having seen her to the gate, little suspecting it was the last time she should ever have the pleasure of beholding that amiable lady.

Don Alphonso and Donna Anna went together to the port, and beheld one of the most beautiful spectacles the world can afford ; the moon and stars rendered the night, which was perfectly serene, almost as bright as day ; the heat of the air tempered by a gentle breeze ; the city affording the fairest prospect on the one side, as the sea did on the other ; multitudes of people abroad ; numbers of boats passing and repassing ; the gallies ranged in exact order, with their streamers displayed, and in short, every thing that could make so splendid a scene agreeable. But this, which filled every innocent mind with joy and satisfaction, had no operation at all on the dark and disordered soul of Don Alphonso, whose thoughts were entirely turned to the execution of his bloody design, which became so much the more barbarous and base, as a shew of tenderness was put on the better to betray this innocent victim. Antonio met them at the port, and was very solicitous to procure a proper station for them to see the ceremony of the Viceroy's embarking, and the gallies departing out of
port

port under the salvo of all the artillery. Immediately after this the clock struck ten, when Donna Anna put her husband in mind of going home, upon this Antonio pressed him to take a small collation at his house, to which the young lady was exceedingly averse, and Don Alphonso pretended to be entirely of her sentiments. At length however, as if overcome by his friend's persuasions, he consented, on condition that they should drink only a glass or two of wine, and stay but a very little while, which Antonio very readily promised. Poor Donna Anna, who had never been in the streets before at that hour, trembled at every step she took, while her perfidious husband encouraged her with the kindest expressions, and Don Antonio endeavoured to divert her with the sallies of his delusive and destructive eloquence.

When they came to the house of Marco Antonio they knocked at the gate, which an old woman who was a kind of housekeeper opened, and they went directly into the garden, where they found a table covered with a cold pasty and some plates of ragout's. As soon as they were set down, Antonio cut a slice or two of the pasty, put it on a plate and gave it his servant, telling her at the same time she might eat her supper in her own room, and go to bed when she pleased, leaving the key in the outer door, that when he had seen his friends home, he might be able to come in without obliging her to rise. The old woman did as she was bid, and having placed the bottles and glasses within her master's reach withdrew, Donna Anna was eating some of the pasty, which Antonio had put upon her plate when Don Alphonso rose, as if
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it had been to reach a bottle of wine, and going behind his wife, drew a hanger that he wore at his side, and at a single blow divided her head from her body. This done, they took the corps, and threw it into a well that was at the bottom of the garden, and then wrapping the head in a cloth they went out together, Marco Antonio locking the door, and putting the key under it. They directed their steps immediately to the port, near which, in a bye place, they interred the head, and then went on board a galley that was to join the viceroy, which put to sea about an hour afterwards to their no small satisfaction. For, alas! they never considered that against divine justice there is no precaution, no asylum where the guilty can be safe, no arts that can defend those from discovery, whom the searching eye of providence has marked for destruction.

The next morning Antonio's housekeeper being up, and not finding her master in his chamber went down into the garden, and was not a little surprized to see the table just as she left it, except that the cloth that covered it was all over blood, and the chair on which Donna Anna sat in the same condition. She was well acquainted with Don Alphonso, but she did not know that the lady he brought with him was his wife, which hindered her from forming a right notion of this cruel transaction. Taking off therefore the table cloth, she went to the gate and found the key under it. Some time after going to draw water she found the buckets stop, and that it was impossible for her to force them into the well. Upon this lighting a candle, and letting it down as low as she could, she saw a body without a head lying directly across
the

the well; frighted at this dreadful sight she ran directly into the street, and by her shrieks and cries alarmed the whole neighbourhood. The people coming about to know what was the matter, she told them without the least disguise all she knew, and all she had seen, and by their assistance quickly drew out of the well the corpse of Donna Anna. That poor lady had nothing on but a taffety petticoat, the weather being excessively hot, a green silk jacket, rose coloured stockings, and black morocco slippers. The old woman declared, that from the dress she knew it to be the same person that was at supper with her master and Don Alphonso, but was not able to tell her name. The officers of justice being sent for, caused her to be taken into custody, till this matter should be better explained, left a guard in the house, and carried the body into the great court before the palace, till such time as it should be owned. They took care likewise to cleanse the well in hopes of finding the head, but were able to meet with nothing there, except the bloody hanger with which this innocent victim had been dispatched.

Amongst a multitude of persons who came to see this sad spectacle, Don Fernand was one, who no sooner cast his eyes upon the corpse, than he knew it to be that of his grand-daughter's. "Alas, alas, my dear child, cried he, how often has my heart whispered to me, that some treason was designed against thee, to which suggestions I was fatally deaf, believing that a Spaniard, a man of quality, and thy husband, would never harbour in his breast, so base, so black a purpose." The old man, when he had vented in these and such like expressions,

expressions, the first transports of his passion, caused the body to be carried to his own house, where the sight threw his wife into such an agony of sorrow as no words can describe. Don Fernand lost no time in applying himself to the Count de Castro, who acted as viceroy till the arrival of the Duke de Ossuna, and having laid before him the strong grounds of his suspicions, that nobleman comforted him all he could, and assured him that no pains should be spared to bring the murderers to justice. Accordingly he dispatched Antonio de Lina, who exercised at that time the post of major of the city on board a brigantine, with a whole company of the garrison, and a letter addressed to the Marquis de Santa Cruz, desiring him as he was general of the gallies, to cause the two persons mentioned therein to be sought for, arrested, and sent back to Naples. When Don Fernand had procured this order, he caused the body of his grand-daughter to be interred with the solemnity due to her rank, but not till farther search had been made for the head, which was altogether ineffectual. The sight of the funeral revived afresh the memory of the barbarous and bloody action which occasioned it, and excited the warmest desires in the people, to see the inhuman actors of this tragedy punished according to their deserts.

Their satisfaction was not long delayed, the brigantine, on board which major de Lina was embarked, found the gallies in the port of Genoa. The Marquis de Santa Cruz had no sooner read the letter, than he directed strict search to be made for the criminals, but to no purpose, an account being brought him that they went
on

on shore in the morning. In an hour afterwards he had intelligence that they were already in custody, on account of a trifling theft they had committed. On his application to the senate, they were immediately delivered up to the major, who sent them in irons on board his vessel, which sailed again the very next day for Naples. Their process did not take up any considerable space of time, for Don Alphonso made an ingenuous confession, the truth of which Antonio could not deny, so that in the space of a fortnight they were condemned, Don Alphonso to be beheaded, and Antonio to be hanged. The former discovered all the signs of true penitence from the very moment that he was seized, but the latter shewed no proper sense of his condition to the very last. Amongst other crimes of an inferior nature, Don Alphonso confessed the assassination of his sister, and of Don Henriquez, believing them both dead of their wounds, and deplored his inhumanity in that respect, as flowing entirely from the rage and malice of his own heart; whereas he affirmed, that as to the murder of Donna Anna, it had never entered into his mind or been perpetrated by his hands, but through the persuasion of Marco Antonio, whose acquaintance had compleated his ruin. What lay most upon his mind was the theft he committed at Genoa, an action so mean in itself, so contrary to his nature, and done in so strange a manner, that he looked upon it as the effects of an insatiation, by which he was made the instrument in apprehending himself, and as it were forcing a passage into prison, till the vessel that came in pursuit of him should arrive.

When

When he came out of the prison to suffer death he was mounted on a mule, but so extenuated that he could be hardly known, and so weak, that he could scarce keep his seat upon the beast. As soon as Marco Antonio saw him, for they were confined in different prisons, he said with a sneer, "how comes this to pass, my friend, that you who are so brisk when other people's lives are to be taken away, are so much sunk when death comes to your own turn?" "If I could have conceived, answered Don Alphonso, the slightest idea of the torments that I now feel, I should never have been capable of any offence worthy of this punishment." When he was upon the scaffold, he desired that the execution might be respited till the head of his wife was found, pursuant to the directions which he gave, and accordingly some of the officers were sent to dig it up. "My friend, said Antonio, is vastly civil to the people that he kills, he will send next for his sister's body, for my part, I love to dispatch things, let them be of what nature they will." Having pronounced these words, he jumped off the ladder, the cord being about his neck before, dying with the same impudent contempt of shame with which he lived. A few minutes after, the officers having given an account that the head of Donna Anna was found, Don Alphonso with great patience and resignation submitted to the punishment that the law had prescribed. The Spanish nobility took care that his corpse should be decently interred, and the populace deplored his misfortune, throwing the whole weight of his crime upon his companion, whom

whom a multitude of villainous actions had rendered long before universally odious.

The news of this dreadful end of his only son came to the ears of Don Pedro, as he was sitting at picquet with a gentleman in his own house at Seville, and did not affect him so much as to hinder his playing out his cards without any visible emotion. All he said after the game was done was no more than this. "It is better to lose a son even by the hands of the hangman, than to be put every day to the blush by the thoughts of his having made an unworthy marriage." But the same hand that had reached Don Alphonso when he thought himself at such a distance from justice, fell as heavy upon Don Pedro, since about a month after he was found dead in his bed, by his page who brought him his cloaths at the usual hour. As this sudden death hindered him from putting in execution the design he had formed of leaving a very large fortune in ready money to a distant relation, the whole devolved upon Don Henriquez, and Donna Mencia, who were thereby enabled to make an ample provision for a numerous posterity. This tho' a poor, was the only consolation they had for being unhappy in two such near relations, after being deprived for so large a portion of their time of the comforts they might have expected from a father and a brother, and which were not to be replaced by any accession of wealth in the sentiments of persons of so much honour and piety, in whom even the greatest injuries could not destroy those affections that were implanted by nature.

Upon the occasion of this relation, continued Mr. Pensive, I might be tempted to say somewhat

what of the wide difference between our manners and those of the nation I have been describing, or rather which I have given you from an elegant writer of their own, but that I leave these remarks to a person infinitely more capable of rendering them worth your hearing. One thing however I cannot help observing, that in such short histories as these, where things are truly described and characters drawn after nature, a very useful, as well as agreeable picture is presented to the view of young people, and many points of practical knowledge may by this means be conveyed into their minds as it were by stealth, which they will not easily forget, and which may be of service to them in the perusal of graver authors, as well as in the course of common conversation. We may be easily convinced of this, if we consider how many strange questions are asked, what a face of wonder appears, and what an inclination to credulity is discovered, when any piece of surprizing intelligence is conveyed to us from foreign countries, tho' perhaps there be nothing that contributes to give it that aspect, but our wanting so much as a general knowledge of the customs of the people amongst whom it happened. In respect to Spain this is particularly true, because it lies out of the road even of those who have made, what is called the tour of Europe, and who are sometimes not free from prejudices, notwithstanding the foreign countries they have seen, in reference to those with which they are not acquainted.

The two vices that were the ground work of all these tragedies, are not by any means however peculiar to that, to this, or to any other country,

country, but are unfortunately errors too common in human nature. The first is an unaccountable and unjust distinction between children founded in this, and very frequently in other cases upon the resemblance of the favourite's humours with that of the parent. At the bottom therefore, this like most of our other foibles is nothing more than a self complacency, and the love of our own nature in that of our offspring. Yet this does not render it at all more excuseable, but quite the contrary, for the duty of parents is to love their children, and not themselves in their children. This observation, if made in time, would certainly be a means of correcting an error which must have always bad, and as this history shews, may sometimes have the most dangerous consequences. The desire of bettering our own circumstances, or those of our children without any regard to the rest of the world, is manifest injustice, but to aim at raising a great fortune for one child, at the expence of another, is unnatural as well as unjust. It is acting not only against the dictates of reason, religion, and morality, but also in direct defiance to divine providence, which having given to children an equal right to our care and protection, we cannot deprive them of it, without offending, I was going to say insulting, the law from which that right is derived.

The other vice is that odious spirit of resentment, visible in the conduct of Clavella; and I am afraid not always confined to persons of her loose character. This itch of divulging secret history, this envious inclination to blast another's happiness, this barbarous disposition to set fire to a train without caring whom it may blow up,
is

340 The Progress of Vice; or,

is one of the most desperate errors, with which the human mind can be infected. In many it proceeds from malice, but in many more from a kind of heedlessness which arises from not considering, that words once spoken are not to be recovered, and that it is infinitely easier to light a flame than to extinguish it. We ought in most things to consider consequences, but in none more than in these kind of discourses, which are rarely tolerable, because they are rarely innocent; and tho' indiscretion may be sometimes pleaded as an excuse, it can never justify. It is in vain to say, that we are not accountable for other people's actions, for the charge immediately recoils, and we stand convicted on our own confession, that we are accountable for our own actions and what flows from them.

These reflections are very serious, yet after so melancholy a relation they could not be otherwise, but perhaps my verses are not altogether of so gloomy a cast, and may serve, or at least were intended to relieve us a little from such solemn speculations, which however may become the true parents of mirth, if by putting us constantly on our guard, they have a tendency to preserve our virtue, and defend us from those faults and follies, which sooner or later are attended with regret.

STANZA'S.

I.

*Who follows reason's rules is truly wise,
And men are shewn from moral actions good,
Yet honour's maxims we must duly prize,
To these subservient being understood.*

II. But

II.

*But as false science is of follies worst,
 As virtue feign'd becomes the blackest vice,
 So is the knave and fool compleatly curst,
 Who being such would seem in honour nice.*

III.

*In vain would he this flimsy cov'ring throw,
 O'er crimes and errors in his conduct seen,
 This stale device the meanest mortals know,
 Which moves at once their hatred and their spleen.*

IV.

*Quick sense of honour in the man of worth,
 Adorns the robe that virtue has array'd,
 By which respect is from the world call'd forth,
 And at first sight the willing homage paid.*

V.

*When weak and wicked men would put this on,
 Like an embroidered cloak on spotted coat,
 What it should hide it makes more clearly known,
 Calling each eye their impudence to note.*

I protest, said Olivia, that this story has made my blood run cold, and I must freely acknowledge has convinced me of the truth of one of our friends remarks, that these kind of histories are very proper to give us ideas of other nations, for it differs widely from the sentiments which I have hitherto entertained as to the dispositions of the Spaniards. I cannot however say, that it

342 The Progress of Vice ; or,

is at all improbable, as it seems to present to our view the wrong side of those qualities of which we are accustomed to see the right. But I find the Spanish point of honour may be very dangerously misapplied, and I can easily conceive that this must be so amongst those who account it a virtue to persist in whatever path they tread, who prefer a whim sanctified by the publick voice to the dictates of nature and good sense; and who are in love with what they miscall constancy, which must pass for downright obstinacy with all impartial judges. I have often read and heard of Spanish heroes, whose intrepidity and fortitude could scarce be enough admired; but for these Dons, Pedro and Alphonso, they look to me like a couple of monsters dressed in Spanish habits, and therefore I must have my friend Mr. Anguish's opinion, whether the characters are genuine, or the facts true.

It so falls out, Madam, returned Mr. Anguish, that I am very well acquainted with the lady's works, from which Mr. Pensive borrowed this history, and whose name, if I remember right, is Donna Maria de Soto Major. She is justly esteemed by those of her own country for her probity and veracity, as well as for her genius. I must likewise observe, that the facts are very likely to be true, and the rather, from a circumstance hinted by that gentleman, that the names of the families are industriously concealed. As to those which are capable of verification, there can be no dispute about them, since there is nothing better known than that the Duke de Ossuna, from being Viceroy of Sicily became Viceroy of Naples, in the room of the Count de Lemos, and that the Count de Castro, who

was the brother of the last mentioned nobleman, acted as Viceroy till the arrival of the Duke. This is all I am able to say, and perhaps you'll think it enough, as to the truth of the facts; and with respect to the characters you cannot entertain any suspicion, that a Spanish lady of quality should not be able to draw them with justice, or that she should be at all inclined to exaggerate to the prejudice of her own country. That is a failing not very common in any nation, and from which of all others the Spaniards are most exempt. I should perhaps be tempted from a long acquaintance with this people to make some little apology for them, but I think it unnecessary after what Olivia has remarked. The best things when corrupted become the worst, and as there is no character fairer than that of an honest Spaniard, so take the reverse of that character, and it is not easy to find a blacker. This accounts so naturally for all we have heard, that I need detain you no longer upon the subject.

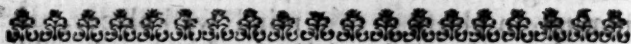
Give me leave then, said lady Constantia, to proceed a little farther. Remove this whim of the point of honour, and substitute any other common prejudice that may be prevalent amongst any people, and if you will take the pains to trace it, I will venture to affirm, that you will find it productive of as bad actions, and of as dismal effects. What think you of the spirit of gallantry among the French, what say you to the spirit of jealousy in Italy, or what can be thought of that spirit of intrigue which reigns almost in every court? Is there a nation in Europe or in the universe free from the foulest crimes? Yet follow these closely, and ascend to

their primitive sources, and you will find that they rise as often from ill grounded notions as from vicious passions. It is therefore unjust to load any particular nation in this respect too severely. Our friend indeed has destroyed this entirely by his two remarks, for surely that unaccountable prejudice in parents, and that spirit of calumny which he has so keenly exposed are not confined to the Spaniards; and tho' it may be true, that in other countries they do not end in murders, yet poverty, absolute ruin, and lingering deaths, tho' not so shocking to the sight, are equally terrible to well disposed minds. We are all apt to see things in different lights, and amongst the many useful circumstances that attend these amusements, I look upon this not to be the least, otherwise I should not have troubled you so often, or have spoke my mind so freely.

Amongst such dreadful evils, said Miss Henrietta, it is in reality no easy matter to distinguish which is the least, but methinks, there requires no mighty degree of wisdom to discover that in all countries children are very unhappy in having their future fate so strongly dependant on the caprice of their parents. For this reason assuredly such children can never be sufficiently thankful to heaven, as have the felicity of owing their birth to virtuous and religious persons, well disposed themselves, and earnestly desiring to implant the seeds and cherish the growth of goodness, in those to whom they have given being. In this there seems to be, on the one hand, the exercise of the highest prerogative bestowed on any created being; and on the other hand, the strongest motive to affection, the firmest tie to obedience.

obedience. I speak it from my heart, and with some degree of experience, that there is no meditation so pleasing to a mind well placed, and having the free use of its faculties as the obligation arising from thence to love, to esteem, to revere, and almost to adore those from whom it flows, and who in this respect resemble exceedingly the author of all beings, that they have a warmer and more exquisite tenderness for those to whom they are thus kind, than it is possible for love or gratitude to repay.

I plainly perceive, interrupted Beaumont, that Henrietta is so much affected with what she has been saying, that it becomes a point of good manners to put an end, without ceremony, to our present conversation; and therefore, gentlemen, if you please let us withdraw, and leave the ladies to themselves.



THE
FATAL CREDULITY ;
OR, THE
FRENCH MAGICIAN.

A singular piece of secret, and at the
same time true history.



AS lady Constantia's little assembly met earlier this evening than usual, they fell into a general conversation upon the subject, which had been started the night before. Sir Lawrence Testy observed, that there was nothing stranger to him, than that a certain kind of philosophy which attributed all things to chance could ever gain ground in the world, or be patronized by men of sense and parts. I am the more surprized, said he, at this, because it is impossible that men should have framed those subtil and plausible arguments, which have been offered in support of this notion, without employing much pains and thought ; and yet it seems to me, that whoever considers the matter with any tolerable attention, cannot fail of perceiving that

that there is a certain connection between causes and events, which appears plainer and plainer from new discoveries made by experiment in the natural world, and from all just and free inquiries into the moral state of things. It is indeed true, that we may with some degree of propriety make use of the word chance, in reference to our own views and endeavours, since with all the skill and contrivance that we can possibly employ, we can obtain no more than a probability, and can never arrive at a certainty of success. But what we stile chance in this case, is only so in respect to us, and is the consequence of our ignorance, since things happen not through our direction, but in some kind of order, and from a complex concurrence of causes which we cannot penetrate, but which remain causes nevertheless for all that; so that notwithstanding we are very sensible of our own weakness in contemplating the power, direction, and tendency of causes, and from thence argue rightly, that it is a chance whether the measures we take, will answer the ends for which they were taken, yet we may easily comprehend that our disappointments are not the absolute effects of chance, which we are frequently ready to confess, by saying, if we had done so, or so, things would have gone otherwise. Upon this foundation, it seems to me very bad policy, for a parent to do any thing that deviates from justice with a view to favour his child, because he is certain that he does wrong, and that it will be a damage to himself, whereas he cannot be certain that his child will reap the advantage he designs; so that there can be nothing more absurd than to be at a certain loss, with a prospect of an un-

certain gain, more especially when independent of the crime, the advantage in view can never be of such a nature, as to render the risk in any degree reasonable, even according to the rules of human computation. On the other hand, taking in the doctrine of probability, and the system of providence, such a conduct becomes still more absurd. For tho' we know not all the intermediate steps between causes and effects, yet they must be known to a superior being, whose wisdom it is impossible should be eluded by our cunning; and therefore upon the whole we only deceive ourselves, and do acts that are prejudicial to us, and which it is impracticable that we should render beneficial to those, for whose good we design them.

It is not possible for me to say, returned lady Constantia, whether I clearly comprehend or not the scope of your reasoning, but I fancy that I shall not contradict it, when I affirm, that in all my observation, I never knew any projects of that kind succeed, but on the contrary have seen a variety of instances, where the unjust measures pursued by parents for the profit of their children, have so operated as to make them miserable, sometimes in the life-time of those parents, and sometimes after their decease. In-somuch that any reasonable person might be convinced, that if they had been blessed with a real foresight of events, they would never have taken the steps they did. Upon these principles therefore it has been always my private opinion, that what the world calls subtilty and cunning, is in reality a species of weakness. True sagacity consists not in framing a notion how things may fall out, and making a provision in case they
should

should fall out so, but in penetrating how they will fall, and taking precautions accordingly. If therefore the children of such cunning persons are really unhappy, and that too in consequence of the very means made use of to make them otherwise, their parents ought to be considered as acting under a mistake, and consequently of being guilty of weakness.

Your ladyship certainly apprehends my meaning right, said Sir Lawrence, and have set it in a clearer light than I did. But if these things be so obvious to a person of an ordinary capacity like myself, and at the same time deducible from an experience so short as that which your ladyship has had of the world, is it not very strange, that people who have parts far superior to mine, and assisted by the lights of an experience much more extensive than yours, should yet fall into a behaviour which we see just grounds to condemn? This I must own is a thing that I cannot easily comprehend, and I should be very glad to hear it explained by some more penetrating genius, or at least one better acquainted with human nature.

Tho' I am very far, said Olivia, from assuming either of those characters, yet I think the matter not quite so obscure, as to affright an ordinary genius from attempting the solution of the difficulty you propose. It is not through want of abilities that such cunning people miscarry, but because they do not exercise them. First of all suffering their affections to be carried away with a violent desire of doing what they ought not to do, they act entirely under the direction of that passion, and never take in a view extended enough to give them a just no-

tion of the difficulties with which their scheme is embarrassed. Her ladyship and I differ a little therefore as to this point, she thinks that what the world calls cunning in this respect is really weakness, whereas I conclude it rather a sort of madness, and I think it the more probably so, because lunaticks are very remarkable for cunning, and shew great skill and address for very foolish purposes.

There is, Madam, added Mr. Pensive, a great deal of reason in what you say, and in my humble opinion it clearly accounts for the wrong turn that persons take who have otherwise good sense, in things of this kind, on which they have set their whole hearts, and are consequently incapable of examining the circumstances which attend this favourite point with that calmness which they exert on other occasions, and which is absolutely necessary to come at the truth of things. But I must likewise agree with lady Constantia, that without any deep speculations, if they would but barely consult their experience, they could not fail of being set right, inasmuch as from a variety of instances which would easily occur to their memories, they must perceive the extreme folly of such proceedings. If for example, Agrippina had but called to mind what the success was of the plots laid by Livia to deceive Augustus, in order to secure the imperial throne to Tiberius, she would never have taken those steps she did to open a passage to the imperial dignity for her son Nero. Without all doubt, while her mind was big with those dark and dangerous intrigues which she entered into for his sake, she flattered herself with a long succession of Cæsars, and never once suspected that

that the monster for whom she took so much pains, would be the last of his line, would perish miserably by his own hands, and descend to his grave with the imputation of being as infamous a coward, as he was an execrable tyrant.

All this is exceeding true, continued Mr. Anguish, but at the same time Olivia is so far in the right, that these people are certainly mad enough; for what can it be but madness, to fancy they are able to outwit providence, and to take such steps for atchieving what they aim at as no accident shall prevent? In this too they are sometimes soothed by the issue of things, and please themselves for a certain space with the delusive thoughts of having succeeded in their schemes, which however tends only to aggravate their punishment; for without question guilty people are never more unhappy, than when they are believed by others, and even persuade themselves that they are in the height of prosperity. The fall of Sejanus was infinitely more sudden than his rise. He had scarce time to look round him from the high pinnacle on which he stood before he was precipitated to the bottom. In the very last age, Marshal d'Ancre conceived himself far superior to the greatest of the French nobility, at the very instant that he was dispatched by a captain of the guards, who a few days before would have esteemed himself honoured by his protection. I could mention a Spanish minister that flourished a little before him, and who dictated with an air of authority to the proudest monarch Spain ever bore, that in the very zenith of his power, and when he thought he was dearer to his matter than his dominions, was by his command ripped

open when in a swoon from a violent fit of the cholick, and dispatched under pretence of embalming. There is nothing so fallacious in this world as appearances, so that after all it is every body's interest to do what is right without considering consequences, for they cannot happen wrong both here and hereafter, which may easily be the case, if we pursue another course ; for tho' these illustrious examples are mentioned as being in themselves very remarkable, and passed all dispute, yet the same events occur in meaner scenes of life, which to those who observe them are full as certain notwithstanding their obscurity.

After hearing Sir Lawrence declare, said Miss Henrietta, that he could not help being under some surprize at the mistakes made by those who have the highest reputation for parts and prudence, I may take the courage to declare my sentiments, that considering how much we are in the dark, as to futurity, it seems to be no point of wisdom to make large stakes, if I may use the expression, upon any guesses that we may make about it ; and I fancy that if people thoroughly considered this, it would save them abundance of pains in the pursuit of fallacious hopes, and secure them at the same time from being tormented with a multitude of needless fears. How many fine contrivances have been projected for the settlement, and even for the security of the posterity of children who have died in their cradles ; how many schemes have been formed to bar the pretensions of persons whom by some unlooked for event, their very opponents have been forced to support ; what arts have been practised to sap the foundations of some,

men's fortunes, who in their fall have crushed those that procured it ? Since I have begun to think, my own little experience has sufficiently convinced me, that the shortest and safest road to quiet, is to take things as we find them, and to receive the rules of our duty for the laws of our conduct. By pursuing this plain maxim, by instinct sometimes as much as by reason, we see persons not at all distinguished, either by the vivacity of their wit, or the solidity of their understanding, pass honourably through the world, live beloved and die regretted ; while others with characters far superior to theirs in point of abilities and judgment, have perhaps struggled all their lives against variety of misfortunes, and died at last unlamented, even by those for whom they have had the most concern. This could not possibly happen, if such people kept within due bounds, and would be content to exercise their talents about things within their reach. Persons of inferior abilities may therefore succeed in the right road, while great wits are wandering through their own boldness in quitting the beaten path, the consideration of which excited in me this liberty of talking before those whom I ought to hear, and whom I always hear with equal deference and pleasure.

But my little sage, said lady Constantia, with all your prudence and complaisance, have you not forgot that we met to hear Mr. Beaumont, who has sat all this time without uttering a word, with an intent, I suppose, to see whether our great fondness for our own sentiments, might not save him the labour of expressing his, and of gratifying us with the relation, which by the terms of the original contract we are entitled to ?
But

But as my daughter says, people of superior parts have not always the best luck, and therefore I must put him in mind, that we do not consider him to night as the umpire of our debates, but as the person who is to afford us instruction. I know very well, that there is nothing he likes better than to see people engaged in such deep controversies ; while, without taking any part, he seises all that is worth remembering ; sifts it over and over in his own mind, and then lays it up for a proper occasion. However we cannot afford to indulge this temper at present, the clock has struck, and it is high time that he had entered on his task, since he will be at no loss by and by for reasons to adjourn. I see he grows a little impatient, and therefore I have done.

Your ladyship, returned Mr. Beaumont, has a manner of chiding one so obligingly, that a man must be without any tincture of politeness, who is at all impatient under correction, so gentle, and which carries with it such circumstances of good will, as destroy all the acrimony of the reproof. But after shewing your ladyship, that I can bear with patience, I must likewise inform you, that I am chastised without an offence. It was natural for me not to intermeddle with the conversation that might have disordered the plan of my discourse ; so that my silence must be justified even in your own opinion. On the other hand, we are in very good time, so that I was not under the least necessity of interrupting that young lady, who does so much credit to your ladyship and to this assembly. But besides these two points, there is yet a third, that will compleat my apology, which is this.

The

The conversation was exactly suitable to the day, and which was very fortunate for me, supplied the best part of an introduction, which I should have been otherwise forced to make, since the history which I am about to relate, will appear a very full, and I flatter myself, no unacceptable proof of the truth of many things that I have heard asserted, and which I will take the freedom of saying, are very worthy of those by whom they were delivered, and might be of great use to the world, if they could be properly and publickly inculcated. But to come to the point.

There is nothing that more plainly manifests the wisdom of providence, or leaves man less reason to complain of the station in which he is placed, than his having so short a foresight of futurity, which teaches him, if he would follow the dictates of his nature, to mind the business that is before him, and not to trouble himself with what may happen after he is removed from hence. There is a futurity indeed, which is his nearest and greatest interest; but for this the most effectual provision he can make, is to discharge, as his duty directs, the offices to which he is called, and to which nothing can be a greater obstacle, than to suffer his thoughts to rove beyond their proper limits. He will find every thing easy and safe while his cares are thus employed, since though men by their own forwardness may thrust themselves into circumstances very embarrassing, yet it will never be found, that while they modestly follow the dictates of conscience, and the visible calls of that power by which the world is governed, they ever come into a situation which they want abilities

lities to sustain. Such difficulties are not brought about by chance or fortune, much less by providence, but are really of men's own seeking, and the proper product of measures to which they are impelled by violent passions, or into which they fall through their own follies or faults.

The following short history will suffice to set this in a very clear light, and if there appears in it any obscurity, from the neglect of assigning times and places, I dare say you will have the candour to suppose that this does not arise from my inability, to give you those circumstances; but from the impropriety with which they would be attended, by bringing real characters upon the stage, with which it is not at all necessary to our purpose, that we should take such liberties. The point that we have principally in view, is to deduce rules for our own conduct, from the examples of others; and while this is kept in sight, there is not the least occasion for entering into such explanations, as would serve rather to carry away our thoughts from what was most material in the narrative, to what is mere matter of curiosity, which may be gratified where it is of no consequence, and ought not otherwise to be indulged. The lawyers decide the greatest points, though the cases that come before them are stated under fictitious names. If the facts be true and fairly represented, we may form a right judgment, without being acquainted with the persons. Lady Constantia gave us an instance of this at the close of our last amusements, and we had another of the like nature from the Spanish lady, to whom Mr. Pensive owed himself indebted for his memoirs. Having therefore the reason of the thing, and such

such precedents in my favour, I shall proceed in the way that I intended, and give you a true story under a thin but necessary disguise.

The Count de St. Maurice, was the second son of a very ancient family, to which, by his personal merit, he afterwards added the lustre of the highest titles. His person was very agreeable, there was something of sweetness in his look, pleasing at the first appearance, and which charmed the beholder more and more the longer he considered it. He was very active and adroit in all his exercises; had the manners of a person of quality silent or speaking; and though he had a martial air, and was a very good officer, yet there was nothing fierce in his behaviour. His parts were solid, rather than sparkling, he spoke his mind plainly and pertinently, and without affecting it, was very justly esteemed eloquent. He was naturally free from pride, and extremely courteous to all degrees of people. He did not however want ambition, but he wanted, if we may so speak, those vices the world think necessary to support it; he wanted dissimulation in the highest degree; his brow and his tongue had such a correspondence with his heart, that the eyes and ears of every spectator might always take notice of his real intentions. He wanted cruelty likewise, and in this respect he was so deficient, that he chose rather to suffer himself, than that others should suffer for his preservation. He wanted, when he had the power, the will to oppress, and which the politicians hold still a greater fault, he hated oppression in others; his ears were always open to the unhappy; and if he ever discovered pride in any thing, it was in being able

able to relieve. In short, he was a man of great mildness and natural probity, which left him open to the insinuations of others, who were of a different character, and who were sometimes able to work him to their purposes, because the honesty of his own heart made him a stranger to suspicion.

A wonderful train of prosperities induced the world to look upon him in the beginning of his life, as the most fortunate person of his age. His elder brother dying while he was but a youth, he became the heir to his father's estate, which for the times he lived in was very considerable. He made a great addition to this, by marrying the lady Catharine, who was the heiress of a large fortune, descending from a long series of honourable ancestors. But the greatest point of his good fortune arose from the beauty of his younger sister, who became the consort of a potent prince, who for her sake took notice of that merit in her brother, which his own modesty had long concealed, and soon brought him to act on a theatre, where all his deeds were conspicuous and justified that prince's esteem.

He was raised to titles without envy ; named to considerable offices by the public voice before he obtained them from the favour of his master, and executed them so well, and yet with so little sense of his own abilities, that neither the grace of his prince, nor the applause of the people made him in any degree vain. He used all his credit to good purposes, and employed his power to laudable ends ; so that if at this time he had any enemies, as who, in exalted stations, has
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not, they were constrained to dissemble their malice out of regard to themselves; but as our concern is principally with his private character, it is necessary, that from beholding his situation at court, we should turn our eyes to what passed in his family.

His wife, the lady Catharine, though distinguished by birth and beauty, was still more so, by the gentleness of her disposition, and by all the milder virtues that are amiable in a wife. She was pious, charitable and benevolent; kind to her tenants and her servants; respected and beloved by all who knew or had any dependance upon her. The Count de St. Maurice loved her tenderly, and till the marriage of his sister brought him in so extraordinary a manner to court, thought himself as happy as a man could be, in that life of independency which he led in his own country; where after the example of his ancestors, he lived hospitably, and did a great deal of good. What had been formerly his chief delight was still that of his lady. She had not the least tincture of pride or taste for luxury, content with that honourable station in which providence had placed her; the care of her domestic concerns, the education of an only son, and the conversation of her relations and friends left little of her time upon her hands, and what it did leave, was filled up by her devotions and her charities.

When we consider this character, it will not appear at all strange, that instead of arrogating to herself any thing, from what the world called her husband's good fortune, his lady endeavoured rather to temper it by her advice, and to insinuate to him, that it was far more difficult for him to shine

shine in these superior spheres, than to move with dignity in a less exalted station ; that sooner or later his fortune would be exposed to envy ; that the frankness of his behaviour, and his undesigning nature, though qualities fair in themselves, were very far from being such as were most serviceable in this new course of life ; and that it required great circumspection, to steer safely through a sea, where shipwrecks happened every day, in spite of the lights furnished by good sense and experience. This language was far from displeasing her lord at the beginning, on the contrary, it so clearly expressed the dictates of his own heart, and went so much along with his sentiments, that it contributed not a little to that conduct, which, as we have already observed, procured universal approbation.

But in a little time, prosperity drawing flatterers as naturally as honey attracts flies, there wanted not some, who insinuated to this nobleman, that he was not sufficiently grateful to fortune ; that he was slow in improving those advantages which she threw in his way, and that instead of aspiring to the great things which he might obtain, he expressed a kind of lazy satisfaction in what he already possessed. His master contributed not a little to give these hints weight, by pressing him to remain more at court, calling him to his most secret councils, and confiding to his care matters of the highest consequence. But whatever effect all this might have upon the Count, nothing made any impression upon lady Catharine ; she thought independency preferable to greatness ; safety much more to be wished than splendour, and believed that tranquillity would be very ill exchanged, for
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lofty titles, troublesome employments, or dangerous power. Her lord however expressed himself not so well satisfied, as in former times, when she spoke to him on these subjects, and in a short space grew more reserved, and seemed to be better pleased with greatness than when it first became his lot, which lady Catharine could not see without dislike; or distaste, and yet dissemble her sentiments.

The Count de St. Maurice had a brother of a disposition in many respects differing from his own. He was haughty, headstrong, and immeasurably ambitious. He had indeed a fair prospect of preferment, but that prospect appeared to his eyes without bounds; he was impatient, restless and impetuous, and therefore laboured all he could to remove his brother's doubts and fears, and to support the councils of those, who talked in a stile directly opposite to that of lady Catharine. Yet so long as the Count retained the impressions of his first love, and repaid with equal ardour the affections of that amiable person, it was impossible to inspire him with those bold and daring sentiments, which were the delight of his brother and his creatures. In his serious moments, and when he had leisure to reflect, the Count very easily distinguished between real and imaginary happiness, and could not avoid discerning, that the remarks of his lady were full of reason and good sense. He saw daily such examples of the slipperiness of those paths which courtiers tread, that how firm soever he stood himself, he was far from triumphing in security, or being entirely out of the reach of apprehensions. This how much soever he concealed from lady Catharine,
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he would now and then discover in the answers he gave to his brother, and to those sycophants who endeavoured to make him believe, that fortune was at his command, and that his rise depended solely upon his will. These speeches they were obliged to bear, but found it difficult, if not impossible to digest.

In short, they began to perceive, that the only way to acquire an absolute dominion over him, was to sap the good understanding which had hitherto subsisted in the family, since he would never be brought to serve their purposes, the aim of all court friendships, while he continued upon good terms with his lady. A thousand arts were tried to wean him from her company, and to give him a disgust of her conversation. Sometimes they flattered his own great qualities, and interspersed malignant suggestions, that women preferred their own empire to the elevation of their husbands. Sometimes they rallied that lady's good qualities, as rendering her only fit for retirement, and made a court disagreeable to her, because she could not be agreeable in it ; and when these were attended with little success, they had recourse to worse practices. They insinuated that a country life might have secret charms capable of ballancing and over-ballancing the gaieties of a court ; and taking advantage of that open and amiable candour which constantly appeared in lady Catharine's conversation, they mis-interpreted the marks of her friendship, as if they carried in them a meaning of a warmer nature. By these dark and treacherous steps, they speedily found that their progress was more sure. In this track therefore they continued, till by degrees they
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begat a coldness between the fondest couple of the age, and infused into the mind of the Count a jealousy, so much the more uneasy, as it was altogether unreasonable. They diligently dissembled the sense they had of their own success; laid aside their former manner of speaking, and magnified, upon all occasions, the beauty, the good sense, and the complacency of lady Catharine, poisoning all her perfections by their perfidious flattery.

At this time there prevailed in France a species of folly, which though often detected and exposed in civilized countries, and in ages of true learning, yet has by intervals started up again and miserably misled mankind. This folly is the desire of penetrating by secret and sinister arts into things not cognizable by lawful and intelligible science. It is not very strange, that a sort of knowledge absurd and unnatural, should be sought by methods trifling and ridiculous, or that those who are bent upon deceiving themselves, should be drawn in to believe, and to be persuaded of the truth of things equally false and foolish. Reason tells us, that futurity lies without the compass of human faculties, except so much as can be reached by conjecture. But the professors of these occult arts make such as consult them confide in their delusive projects, for looking into futurity with the same certainty that can be had, with respect to present or past events; whereas good sense tells us, that the instruments of such knowledge are found nowhere, though the patrons of such practices pretend to find them every where. Some aspire to read whatever is contained in the book of destiny by the contemplation of the heavens, where they affirm it is written in starry characters; others

thers more modest, but not at all more intelligent, pretend to seek it upon the earth; or in the sand by spots or points scattered at random, and then collected by certain rules framed at pleasure, and which have not either probability or meaning. In all this we find but one thing extraordinary and beyond conception, which is, that notwithstanding these notions are alike simple and irrational ; yet in their turns they have imposed upon men, who from their judgment in other respects, could hardly have been suspected of so much weakness and credulity, which is a most mortifying proof of the fallibility of human understanding.

Amongst the follies of this kind then in fashion, there was one which passed amongst such, as could condescend to believe, that providence might be outwitted, and the order of nature reversed by witches and wizards, that was regarded as the supreme effort of these mystical intrigues. This was not representing to the ear by sounds, but to the eye, in what was stiled a magic speculum ; scenes that either passed at a great distance of space, or were to pass at a great distance of time, things equally beyond the power of human skill to effect, but which fraud might easily counterfeit. For whether we have the leave of this wise people or not, truth and experience will allow us to affirm, that credit was given to every species of these delusions, by the help of some kind of cheat, and in this particular case it may be very easily explained. The pretended sage placed his looking-glass in open view, so that the person who was to be the dupe of his contrivance, might be the less inclined to suspicion ; but when the feat was to be performed

performed, his attention was called off, by certain useless, and unmeaning ceremonies; which while from the oddness of their appearance, he could not help observing, a picture was silently removed into a proper place; the images in which being reflected by the help of the glass, and then suddenly disappearing, left such an impression on the mind, as answered the intention of the fraudulent contriver, and by alarming the passions of the person deceived, rendered him less capable of detecting the imposition, as being once deceived, rivetted him in his folly.

The Count de St. Maurice being at Paris, upon an affair of importance, at the time his thoughts were most disturbed with those jealous apprehensions which his false friends had suggested; some of them with their usual address intimated, that his doubts might be easily cleared by an application to one of these workers of wonders; and as none ever have recourse to them, but such as are under distraction of mind, so we may very easily comprehend how this would work upon an understanding already troubled; or rather from the operation of this artifice, we may form a just notion of his anxiety and concern. The sage was accordingly applied to, and great difficulty was found in persuading him to afford such a testimony of his skill; the danger of the laws; the fear of discovery; the consequence of the action; were magnified to heighten his expectation, and to give time perhaps for procuring such an apparatus as was necessary on the occasion. At length when the Count's fears on the one hand, and curiosity on the other were raised to the utmost height, the solemn dissembler was prevailed

upon, in respect to so great a person, to give him a specimen of his supernatural science, and of that extraordinary confidence which he reposed on his promise of keeping it secret. All things being got ready for his reception, the Count repaired to the apartment of this agent for the infernal powers, in order to allay the tumult in his breast, by the sight of something beyond the reach of an ordinary man to perform, or of a sound head to conceive ; and after a discourse calculated to answer the purpose, the conjurer undertook to shew him where lady Catharine then was, and what she was doing, though at the distance of three hundred leagues.

The Count having passed through all the ceremonies, which this son of Belial had invented to elevate the astonishment, that was requisite to give his endeavours success, placed him before the mirror, which he for some minutes contemplated, without perceiving any thing, the sage remaining all the time at his elbow, and assuring him, that what he had promised would infallibly appear. At length, when his impatience was thoroughly excited, there was presented a lady in a well known dress on a couch, with a man leaning by her in a familiar posture, which before the first transport of rage and resentment could allow him sufficiently to distinguish disappeared. In vain were all his intreaties to be gratified with the sight afresh ; the wizard declared that to be out of his power. His demons had performed all they had in charge, and it was impossible for him to constrain them to repeat their labours. The Count was thereupon forced to depart, after depositing a golden tribute in the temple of folly, with all that agony and

and confusion of heart which ever accompanies such impious expeditions. For impious we may truly stile them, though we hold them at the same time impositions; for whoever expects things to be done beyond the power of nature, and yet not by the Lord of nature, must of course direct his expectations to beings of another kind; and though communications with them may be impossible, yet the will of the votary is the same; and as there cannot be a greater impiety than to seek for help from beings at perpetual enmity with God, such an intention must be impious, though it is very probably frustrated in the execution.

At his return to his own country, the bitter effects of this wicked event were manifested in the treatment of the innocent and unhappy lady Catharine, who as if this delusion had amounted to a conviction of infidelity, was used with that slight and disdain, which affected and afflicted her the more, as it was altogether undeserved, and the cause in a great measure concealed. A son, of which she was not long after delivered, participated of his mother's hard treatment, and being born of a weak and sickly constitution, survived not long, and which was worse, went to the grave, without exciting any emotion of grief in the bosom of a parent, who was in some measure the cause of his death as well as his birth. The melancholy of lady Catharine wore her too gradually into a state of decay, which making little or no impression on the mind of a husband, whose conjugal tenderness had been once so great, he waited and wished for her end with impatience, and when it happened, beheld it without pity. Such were the consequences

quentes of his listening to the seducing speeches of self-interested sycophants, who while they magnified his virtues, taught him to lessen them, and while they advised him to trust to his abilities, and to push his fortune to the utmost, took care to corrupt the former, and meant to make the latter subservient only to their own, in which detestable project, through his weakness and their own assiduity, they met with but too much success.

It was no very long space that intervened, between the Count's shadow of mourning for his first wife, and those magnificent marks of real joy that were attendants on his second marriage. His new Countess did not perhaps love him more, but certainly made more a shew of love than his first. She was a lady fit for his present fortune, and for his future pretensions; of high birth, so high, that she boasted her veins were distended with royal blood, and of this she might have pleaded, that her spirit was another proof, since if not royal, it was at least imperious. She had all the breeding, and many of the arts of a court; she resolved from the first moment to rule her husband, and to effect this, she counterfeited submission. Her language was all obedience, but this obedience was paid only to orders flowing from her own suggestions. Her wits were continually at work to ensnare; her blandishments perpetually employed, to retain in subjection, a man who knew no suspicions now he needed them; notwithstanding they abounded at a time when they were fatal to his peace. By becoming the agent of another's will, he was so changed, that the world hardly knew him, and yet this alteration, great as it was, remained

a secret to himself. The more considerable part of his flatterers lifted themselves under the banner of the Countess, and as for such as were unwilling to enter into this service, they were quickly undermined in his confidence, and it was not long before they were excluded his presence.

His near relation to the young prince, who succeeded his brother-in-law, raised the Count to real sovereignty without the title, and therefore made it the less necessary for him to be solicitous of new honours, since in reality they were to be conferred by himself upon himself, which would have spoiled their relish to a man of nice taste. But his lady was set upon them, and he could not refuse her, neither was it long before the cruel reason appeared; for these new honours, and the best part of his old estate were secured to her children; and this, notwithstanding the Chevalier St. Maurice had merited that title by his service in the field, under his father's command, and clearly demonstrated the nobility of his birth, by the unsophisticated lustre of real virtues. He was, in short, the image of his father, at the time he became so; he had his courage, his piety, his sincerity, his love for peace, his contempt of grandeur, and his compassion for the poor; and as this behaviour towards him was unjustifiable in every respect, so it was in some measure repaired, by the universal esteem shewn him by persons of all ranks, even by those, whom the Count's new measures had rendered his enemies. But all this could not open that nobleman's eyes, or bring him to see the Chevalier's virtues in the same light, in which they were beheld and spoken of by the whole nation.

But in this perhaps, he was in some measure excuseable, since public distractions in a great measure diverted his thoughts from domestic concerns and things of a private nature. His brother, the baron, whom we have before described, instead of supporting his authority, gave him great disturbance. That nobleman had much the same views, and too much of the same spirit with the Countess, which quickly set them at variance, and by a fatality not unusual in courts, by becoming both of them great men, they began to forget that they were still brothers. By degrees their animosity swelled so high, that the Count de St. Maurice suffered himself to be persuaded, that his authority could not be safe while the baron held any degree of power. Their common enemies saw this variance with pleasure, and those very arts which the baron had formerly used to excite his brother's ambition, were now practised to make him jealous of his safety, in case the baron was not destroyed ; in order to effect which there was a strange concurrence of parties. The public clamours, whether well or ill founded, were ecchoed in his closet by his creatures ; instilled into his morning and evening thoughts by the partner of his bed, and aggravated by those, whose duty it was to have appeased them, his spiritual guides. All together contributed to bring about the destruction of that busy and factious nobleman, who paid the full price of his faults, be they what they would ; and as he rose, so he fell by his amours, owing his greatness to his own marriage, and his ruin to that of his brother's.

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After this, our great nobleman quickly found, that what he looked upon as an act of necessity for his preservation, was in reality the first step to his fall; and that some of those who had urged him, to what they then stiled a salutary severity, now reproached him with unnatural cruelty; and from covered insinuations, that too much mildness might be prejudicial to him and the state, broke into loud exclamations, that all things were to be feared, from an ambition, which neither regarded the suggestions of mercy, when an enemy had lost the power of doing hurt, nor listened to the dictates of nature for a brother in distress. His lady also had a share, and a very large one too, in the general blame that followed this proceeding, though she had flattered herself, that the assistance she lent to the baron's enemies, would have made them her friends, she quickly found herself cruelly mistaken; and which was worse, that instead of strengthening her lord's power, and consequently her own, she had by this very management given a great accession of weight to those, who now made no scruple of avowing their intention to abridge his authority; urging for this the very same reasons, which had been made use of to countenance the proceedings against the baron, which were now found to carry a double edge, that of their own force, and that of his confession, upon whom they were turned.

This lofty lady, who had flattered herself, that the same skill which enabled her to manage so great a personage as her husband was become, would make it no difficult thing for her to guide the humours of meaner persons at her pleasure, found that also, when it was too late,

to be no better than a dream ; for while she was pleasing herself with schemes of encreasing that grandeur, which was already so great as to produce general envy ; she found to her cost, that others were better politicians, and that councils of state might be held in the city as well as the palace. The principal enemies of her lord carried things with silence and secrecy, and having taken care to get the old popular mask of public safety new varnished, they proceeded with such a shew of calmness and caution, that they discovered their strength and their scheme at the same time, with this fatal circumstance, that the former was so plausible as to render the latter irresistible. The advices of women concur often to the abuse of power, but are seldom lucky in finding expedients to preserve it. When therefore this storm burst so unexpectedly, it took the great lady quite unprovided. She was amazed at the desertion of false friends, and confounded at the sight of so much power in hands where she never expected it. She left her lord therefore to take his own measures, which was in truth, the first step to his preservation. As his own character was unexceptionable, so his own measures were such as suited best with his safety, he gave way to that torrent, which had otherwise born him down ; and by the prudence of his submission, diverted for that time a storm that had certainly overwhelmed him. His conduct was right in his situation, for finding that he had no force to resist, he disarmed his enemies, by disclaiming opposition, and though he was never thought, and indeed had no title to be thought a politician, yet here he shewed his good sense, and
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secured his safety, by relinquishing an empty title.

If her lord's sufferings could have taught his lady humility, or his fall have extinguished that haughtiness, which was built upon his greatness, they might have been happier in the latter part of their days, than they had been in those which the world esteemed more prosperous; but her humour revived with her fortune, and though that was entirely owing to the virtues of her husband, who was highly respected by many of the nobility, in high credit with the better part of the clergy, and generally beloved by the people; yet she could not forbear re-assuming her dominion, as if she had had no share in his late mortification, whereas to her in truth it was owing; or as if she had contributed to his recovery, whereas that was his own work entirely. She managed his and her interest the second time, rather worse than at first, for when her lord's credit began to be restored, and he might, if let alone, have stood safely without any support, save that of his true friends, and the favour of prince and people, she by a side stroke of feminine wisdom, would needs gain him a new strength, by dealing with those who had deceived her before, and with this view, matched her daughter to the son of him who was never his friend, and had been lately his capital enemy. How her lord came to consent to this, which yet might have been easily seen, was such an alliance, as could not be grateful to those who were attached to him, either by motives of interest or honour, cannot be conceived; if we did not know, that the best men are liable to follow the worst of coun-

cils, when given by those they love. This had been his case already, and was so now ; the same syren charmed him, and the music of her voice tempted him to trust once more that faithless sea, in which he had so lately and so narrowly escaped shipwreck, and that too not without a loss great enough to have taught him, if any thing could have taught him more caution.

When this enterprising lady found by experience, the only mistress to whose instructions she could listen, that she had to do with persons far more subtle than herself, and that she had again increased their power by the very measure she took with an intent to increase her own ; she suffered herself to be carried away by her resentment, instead of sitting down with the disappointment ; and notwithstanding all her intrigues had hitherto been attended with such untoward consequences, she launched out into new designs more dangerous indeed, but not deeper or better laid than her former contrivances. In these she found it more difficult to obtain the concurrence of her lord than she expected. They were so opposite to his nature, so repugnant to his principles, and so inconsistent with his character, that he could never be brought to give them so much countenance as she desired. Yet fatally for him and her, in his unguarded hours, and while the clamour of her passionate harangues still vibrated on his ear, he let fall dark hints and harsh expressions, which her creatures picked up and betrayed, and thereby brought on their common ruin. But after cooler thoughts, and more mature deliberation, he utterly disapproved such raw and

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rash attempts as had been suggested, and held fast his integrity, though on some particular occasions he had departed from his discretion. The sad issue of this perplexed business, was the entire subversion of what remained of his fortune, together with his personal catastrophe, which did much more honour to his courage than his friends expected, and blasted his enemies with such an odium, as soon after brought them to destruction. In short, he died unfortunately, but he died innocent, and in his last moments shewed himself, what he would have appeared in his whole life, if his conduct had been the result of his own notions, a pious, brave, and worthy nobleman, which excellent qualities survived in all his race.

Thus the beginning of his public misfortunes was a miscarriage in his private character, and the ruin of his greatness was the consequence of a mistake in private life. If he had yielded to the advices of his first lady, he might probably have had those honours forced upon him, an inexpedient assuming of which cost him so dear. He would certainly have kept within the bounds of that happy moderation, to which his own nature was inclined, and would never have provoked those storms by which he was so long tossed, and in which he was at last swallowed up. His lady's plan of greatness was buried under his fall, and herself and her children stripped of almost all that had been settled upon them with so much solemnity. As for the Chevalier, the enemies of his father pitying his misfortunes and respecting his virtues, snatched him from amidst the ruins of that haughty structure, in which he had no concern, and re-

storing him to his mother's estate, put it in his power to shew how much better true virtues contribute to real happiness, than those glittering qualities which the vulgar so much applaud.

His own temper, the education he received from his mother, with the remembrance of his father's fate, detached him from the love of courts. He had an estate, which rendered him independent, and enabled him to support that condition, in which he stood with all the splendour that the nobility of his birth and virtues required. He lived long, was happy in an equal marriage, attracted universal respect, gave various testimonies of disinterested loyalty, and true zeal for his country, and by an oeconomy untinged with avarice, made such additions to his fortune, as transmitted to his posterity a large estate, and in length of time, after a variety of changes and accidents, in which their conduct was always honourable, the high titles of their illustrious ancestors devolved upon the heir-male of the Chevalier de St. Maurice, when he bore the same name, and when he was universally allowed to stand possessed at the same time of virtues that added to their lustre.

We so thoroughly examined the subject upon which this story was founded, before I entered upon my relation, that it would not only be tedious, but to no purpose to detain you by any farther remarks. Let it suffice then, if I observe, how strict a connection there is between goodness and greatness, and that the former is the only solid basis, upon which the latter can be erected; that there is nothing so dangerous as listening to the tales of flatterers, and conceiving

ceiving that to be the best road which is most commended by dependants; that prosperity abounds more with temptations than adversity, misleads worthy minds soonest, and keeps them longest in error; that an over-weaning fondness for children tends little to their advantage, and that the desire of prying into, or giving a bias to the events of futurity, is a folly that would be very ridiculous, if it was not complicated with crimes that create horror. These are deductions that flow naturally from the facts that have been mentioned, in which if I have not divulged the whole, I have not to my knowledge digressed at all from truth. That attention with which I have been heard, is such a mark of your approbation, that I think it becomes me to express my gratitude, and confirms me in the hopes that what we first designed for amusement, may in the end deserve a better title, or at least be applied to a nobler use.

*Nor depth of reas'ning, nor laborious speech;
Nor specious studies, nor the skill of schools;
Are needful, to direct the steps of him,
Who aims by innocence to purchase peace.*

*He wishes not to pierce that friendly veil,
Which from his eye with-holds events to come,
Secure, in that his MAKER sees them ALL;
And anxious only to deserve his love.*

*Duty requires no wondrous reach of thought,
Nor is our happiness by science wrought.
An heart benevolent, an humble mind,
Can nothing dark in life; or irksome find.*

But

378 The Fatal Credulity ; or,

*But led by TRUTH thro' no unpleasant way,
Expects the shade of DEATH that leads to end-
less DAY.*

You will not be offended, Beaumont, said lady Constantia, if I take the liberty of observing, that you have painted the character of the Count's second lady very strongly ; I am thoroughly persuaded, that you were not led to this by any disrespect to our sex, but have followed very strictly, what the world calls good memoirs. Yet it is not impossible, that in a case of this nature, even the best memoirs may mislead. For when the secret thoughts and concealed intentions of great persons are introduced by such as we know were strangers to those of whom they speak, it is not very just to receive their evidence without the least abatement, and therefore I should with great submission be inclined to believe, that the Count de St. Maurice had his faults as well as his Countess, and that his misfortunes were as much due to his own want as to his lady's super-abundance of spirit. He seems to have been placed in a station much too high for him, and his head being absolutely turned with power and prosperity, brought on his first fall ; as being afterwards tormented with ambition and resentment, and perhaps prompted by those who were the creatures of his enemies, he rather said than did what brought him into his last troubles.

Permit me, said Sir Lawrence Testy, to offer your ladyship my thoughts upon this subject. The memoirs of this lady are really taken from those who were extremely well acquainted

quainted with them, and it is chiefly for this reason, that conjectural apologies can hardly be admitted. Besides, your ladyship will observe, that the great and fatal error of the Count had such a repugnancy to his known character, that there is nothing improbable in those imputations you were inclined to censure. That the Count had faults is certain, but his faults instead of diminishing, augment the credit of our friend's story. His predominant folly was listening to the insinuations of those about him, submitting to be governed, and entering from thence upon parts which he was not able to sustain. In respect to the sex, Mr. Beaumont has given an excellent picture of his first lady, and if I am not mistaken, has very clearly and consistently shewn, that the same weakness and inability to act according to his own sentiments, which destroyed his domestic happiness, was also the fatal engine that overturned his felicity in public life. A good man in the hands of artful, and under the direction of wicked people, is always an unequal character, and very frequently becomes wretchedly miserable; though if that could be any alleviation, his misfortunes; generally speaking, procure a large share of public compassion.

There is no circumstance in this story, added Mr. Anguish, that moves my spleen so much as the circumstance of the French magician, which is another strong feature of the Count's real disposition, since nothing but weakness of mind ever betrays men into such a mean curiosity. It has been always my sentiment, that the best criterion of true wisdom is the contempt of all these sorts of arts, which when properly considered

considered, will be found utterly incompatible with the principles of virtue and religion. An honest or pious man never looks to the event, but considers what is his duty, and he acts wisely in this, because he acts by a known and certain rule ; whereas such as follow conjectures of any kind, must do it with a view to prefer their interest to their duty, which is often an act of folly, and always of impiety ; because providence has assured us, that how unpromising soever the aspect may be, our interest is inseparable from our duty. Whatever severity there may be, or rather may seem to be in this doctrine, it is really true, and such histories as this, which Mr. Beaumont has related, manifestly prove it, and are therefore most useful lectures to such young people as will be pleased to listen to them, and would rather submit to the salutary uneasiness arising from an half hour's contemplation of such a melancholy narrative, than receive conviction from experience, who is said to be the mistress of fools, and who commonly brings a rod in one hand and a reproof in the other.

Give me leave to add, said Olivia, that though in the case before us, this desire of looking into futurity is ascribed to the other sex, yet I am tempted to believe, that it is more frequently a feminine foible, which Mr. Anguish has set in a true light, and I have known it when pursued only with a ludicrous view, or to speak with greater propriety, with a ludicrous appearance, produce such dismal effects, that I would recommend it as a capital maxim to every young lady for whom I had an esteem, never to let it enter her thoughts, or to keep up any degree

degree of intimacy with persons who are addicted to it ; for certainly there are no diseases of the body more contagious than superstition and enthusiasm, in reference to the human mind ; for as no constitution, however sound, can resist the former ; so no understanding can have such solidity, as not to be in danger from the impressions of such follies, when they grow familiar to them in their acquaintance. Nay, I have sometimes known, that the very contempt of such practices has drawn people into them ; for through a desire of convincing their friends of the folly of confiding in such arts, they have put them to the tryal, and by some unlucky circumstance, the just punishment perhaps of such a condescension, have fallen into the snare, and by once meeting with something that looked like truth, been drawn to listen ever after to the vilest delusions.

As we are to have a great deal of company here to-morrow, interrupted Mr. Pensive, and as the hour has already struck, on which the family usually go to bed on this night, I will for once intrude upon Mr. Beaumont's office, and move, that we may withdraw ; which after their usual civilities, the gentlemen did, and went to their own apartments.

CONCLUSION.



THE design of lady Constantia's having so much company the day before the ladies were expected home, was to prevent Mrs. Anguish's being incommoded with visits and complements, which she knew would not be agreeable either to her or her husband. This gentleman was present at dinner and at supper on that day, but both lady Constantia and Olivia observed that he was graver, more silent, and more absent than usual, which occasioned some speculations. The next morning, as soon as the two ladies were up, they went to take a turn in the garden and sent for Beaumont, to whom they imparted what had occurred to them, and asked him his sentiments. He said that he saw nothing in it but what was very natural, that the approaching interview with his lady after so long an absence, might very probably excite an unusual emotion in his mind, his endeavours to conceal which might very likely produce the circumstances they mentioned, which had not altogether escaped his own observation, to which he added, that Mr. Anguish retired to his apartment earlier than usual, with a view as he supposed to indulge his meditations more freely.

While

While this conversation lasted, a servant came to acquaint them that breakfast was ready in the little parlour, to which when they repaired they found all the company, except Mr. Anguish, and heard with some surprize that he took horse about four o'clock, leaving no other message with his man, than that he intended to take the air, and did not know exactly when he should return. The rest of the company discern'd little extraordinary in this, but lady Constantia and Olivia were very much alarmed, and tho' he did not discover it quite so much, yet Beaumont could not help being moved. His fears however were in a good measure dissipated, when he understood from his servant that Mr. Anguish was remarkably brisk, and in perfect good humour when he took horse. A little before one the whole mystery was cleared up by the arrival of the coach, in which was Mrs. Anguish, and Miss Charlotte attended by Mr. Anguish on one side, and captain Courtly on the other on horseback, so that after all, this was no more than a little piece of Spanish gallantry, by which Mr. Anguish concealed from the view of his friends that tenderness which must have discovered itself at the first meeting with his spouse.

As soon as the ceremonies of their reception were over, Miss Charlotte acquainted lady Constantia, that Calista having been a little indisposed, her aunt would not suffer her to travel, and that such a disappointment was the less uneasy to herself, as it afforded her an opportunity of passing a few days with her sister. This passed off very well for the present, but in a day or two the true reason came out, for Mr. Beaumont at the request of the parties interested, acquainted

acquainted lady Constantia that captain Courtly was desirous of becoming her son-in-law, and that Miss Henrietta had likewise an inclination to make a trip to London with Mr. Anguish and his lady, to execute a certain commission of importance in the purchase of jewels, plate and silks, which were held necessary upon this occasion. Lady Constantia, after consulting Sir Lawrence on the previous steps that were requisite to be taken, as to the settlement, which captain Courtly referred entirely to her good pleasure, came into this scheme with the best grace in the world, more especially as Miss Henrietta shewed great zeal for the marriage, so that in the space of a few days all things were settled with as much privacy as possible, the resolutions taken in the secret committee held in the little parlour, being as well kept as those of any court in Christendom.

But as the very best governments are not altogether free from disorders, so in the midst of these happy events, there fell out an affair which had almost disconcerted all their schemes. Mr. Anguish at the request of his wife proposed to ride, as easier and more agreeable to him than going in the coach, by which there was a place vacant that was to be filled by Mr. Pensive, whose tenderness for Henrietta became every day more and more perceptible. This proposal for his going to London with the ladies was no sooner hinted, than Sir Lawrence relapsed into the spleen, giving his nephew to understand that he did not care to return home alone, and that as things were situated, he could not with any degree of justice form any pretensions to Miss Henrietta. Mr. Beaumont also studiously declined

clined taking the least notice of a matter so evident, that it was impossible he should be ignorant of it, not from any want of regard for either of them, but through a persuasion that having taken the liberty to propose the marriage of captain Courtly with Miss Charlotte, it would appear forward and out of character in him to interfere a second time, where the advantages to lady Constantia's family were not so apparent. The great affection which Mrs. Anguish had for Henrietta, and the like sentiments in Olivia had prepossessed them in an affair, which they thought had such a connection with her happiness, and this without any such enquiry as the prudence of those ladies ought to have dictated. On the whole therefore this business wore a most unpromising aspect, and Beaumont was not a little apprehensive that it might disturb, or at least retard the marriage between captain Courtly and Miss Charlotte.

The last mentioned gentleman could not help feeling a very warm concern for his friend, in whose favour also Charlotte interested herself exceedingly, tho' with much secrecy and caution. At length the captain perceiving plainly that nobody else would attempt it, proceeded one morning so far as to hint something to Sir Lawrence, who without losing his temper answered him very civilly, but told him at the same time it was a matter gave him great disquiet. He assured him that he had a very high esteem, as well as a great tenderness for his nephew, that he should be inclined to make this appear, in the most effectual manner possible, but that it was not in his power, without being guilty of injustice towards his son, to do any thing

thing that might render Mr. Pensive a fit match for lady Constantia's daughter, and that therefore his making his addresses to her had given him much disquiet, as being in his judgment a breach of honour, or at least of hospitality. Captain Courtly, who did not expect to find Sir Lawrence quite so calm and reasonable, justified his friend by asserting that Mr. Pensive had never made any addresses, that on the contrary he had endeavoured to conceal his passion as much as possible, and that if any body was to be responsible to lady Constantia upon this head, it was himself who had discovered it early, and had taken the least pains to conceal it; because he looked upon him as worthy of Henrietta in every respect but that of fortune, to which he was an absolute stranger. Sir Lawrence replied, I will make you master of that secret also. — He has none. But, replied Courtly, he deserves a fortune, and it is not impossible that he may derive one from the industry of his father in the Indies; but in this case, returned Sir Lawrence smartly, possibilities go for nothing, and tho' I must allow my nephew merit, yet I don't know how that can be converted into a jointure.

But notwithstanding this seeming austerity, Sir Lawrence was not much displeased with his nephew, and tho' he spoke to him pretty roundly soon after this conversation with captain Courtly, yet it was only to discover whether what the captain had told him was the true state of the case; Mr. Pensive assured him it was, that he had never mentioned love to Henrietta, from the consciousness of that disproportion there was between their fortunes, and his being sensible that he had no dependance but the kindness

ness of Sir Lawrence. It is very true, answered the old man gravely, but in point of family you are pretty equal. This is a very unlucky affair, Pensive, and tho' my sentiments are entirely altered, I am as uneasy as ever. If you had made your address to the young lady, you would have forfeited my good opinion, since coming hither with me, it had been plainly a breach of honour. But as to your being in love with Henrietta, that may be a misfortune, tho' it is no crime, because it is involuntary. I may therefore both as a gentleman and your uncle feel all the pity that I really do for your condition. How far this may avail you, I cannot say, but if you will take my advice in so delicate a case, and follow my instructions, I will promise never to abandon you. Mr. Pensive in the strongest terms declared his unreserved obedience, as on the other hand, Sir Lawrence desired he would make no address to Henrietta, that he would hinder his friends from meddling any farther with the affair, and that he would take all possible care to prevent any intimation reaching the ears of lady Constantia.

Two or three days before their departure for London, Olivia desired Mr. Anguish and his lady to breakfast in her apartment, where in the presence of Mr. Beaumont lady Constantia delivered the settlement, the deed of gift, and the bond to Mrs. Anguish, adding at the same time these words: Let us see, niece, to what extent some tempers may be trusted, your husband to make you amends for what happened while you were in his power has put himself in yours. It is indeed an act of great generosity, but what prudence there is in it time will shew. That
time,

time, answered Mrs. Anguish, is at hand, the generosity of my husband is highly acceptable to me, and in that light these papers are very welcome. The deed of settlement I commit to your ladyship's care, for in that you allow that Mr. Anguish's prudence is shewn. These marks of his generosity are only valuable in that light, and in another, which will justify his prudence, by shewing that he placed his confidence where it will never be abused. As she pronounced these words, she threw both the papers into the fire, where they were entirely consumed before the company recovered so far from their surprise as to be able to take them out. Lady Constantia laughed, Olivia sat silent in her chair, and Mr. Anguish taking his wife's hand, kissed it several times with much eagerness and with tears in his eyes. In short, the whole company were extremely pleased and thoroughly satisfied, tho' this was expressed rather by their looks than by their language; only Mr. Anguish said to his wife, Madam, I find you are wiser than the lawyers, they said there could be nothing stronger than those writings, you have given the same strength to their ashes, and they will continue to bind me as effectually, as if inrolled in any court of justice. A grateful memory, Madam, is an indelible record! The conversation began to grow general, when it was interrupted by somebody knocking at the door, upon which Olivia desired that they would come in.

The person at the door was the servant of Sir Lawrence Testy, and his business was to inform the ladies, that his master desired permission to speak to them, which was immediately granted. Sir Lawrence told them that he had an affair of
some

some consequence to be transacted in town, and had thoughts of sending his nephew thither, if with any degree of convenience room could be made for him in the coach. Lady Constantia, who had never heard of it before, and who had not the least suspicion of that young gentleman's passion for her daughter, asked the company what could be done. Let Mr. Pensive take my seat, answered Mr. Anguish, I should have rode a great part of the way from choice, and it is far from being a hardship to ride all together, as the roads are good and the weather fine. Lady Constantia expressed great satisfaction, and as for Olivia and Mrs. Anguish they knew not what to make of it. Mr. Pensive had made the highest acknowledgments to them, but had desired they would meddle no farther in the matter, either by speaking to Henrietta, her mother, or his uncle. Mr. Anguish was mightily pleased, and as Sir Lawrence and he went down stairs, he clapt him upon the shoulder with a familiarity very unusual, since you are embarked, Sir Knight, said he, my life for it, Pensive makes a safe voyage. I cannot tell how that may prove, answered Sir Lawrence, but I know that he and I are much indebted to you for your good wishes.

As the ladies were left alone, Beaumont taking his leave in a minute or two after the other gentlemen, Henrietta and Charlotte were sent for to council, in which sundry definitive resolutions were taken upon affairs of some expence and great importance, which were afterwards notified to captain Courtly by Miss Henrietta, and submitted to with the best grace imaginable.

ginable. All matters of law were referred to Mr. Anguish who undertook to get them dispatched by lady Constantia's council in some reasonable time, and as to some private commissions relative to finery and presents, they were intrusted to Mr. Pensive, who as he was never so well pleased in his life as at this juncture, appeared to be quite another man, and undertook to deal with taylor, lacemen, and goldsmiths, with all the dexterity in his power, so that every thing was now fully adjusted, except the conduct of Sir Lawrence, whom lady Constantia was willing to retain, but who was desirous himself of returning to his own seat, and of taking captain Courtly with him.

After mature deliberation, and in compliance with the advice of Olivia and Mrs. Anguish, lady Constantia came into this measure, and it was resolved that the day after the coach set out for London, Sir Lawrence and Courtly should go over to that Knight's house, where Pensive was to join them, and return to lady Constantia's at the time fixed for the marriage. But to prevent lady Constantia's being left with nobody but her daughter, it was likewise agreed that her sister and Calista should be invited thither. Notwithstanding all the perplexity that must have attended such a complicated scene of negotiations, they were managed with so much prudence and address, that the whole was executed without any sinister accident, or so much as a single disappointment, which being a point equally singular and remarkable, in private as well as publick life, certainly deserves our notice, as it must give us a high idea of the persons concerned,

cerned, and of their steadiness and punctuality, qualities highly estimable in all sorts of business, and which contribute not a little to make things go smoothly and happily; but as to all the previous and intervening steps, as they would draw our narrative into a very tedious length, without contributing at all to its clearness, the reader can have no just exception to our historian's conduct in passing over these particulars, more especially when it is considered that this was an effect of his modesty, himself being principally concerned.

Upon the arrival of the company at London, Olivia carried home Miss Henrietta and Mr. Anguish, who had taken care to have a ready furnished house provided for him against his coming, insisted upon Mr. Pensive's taking an apartment with him. As lovers are always impatient, so nothing was omitted that could possibly be done towards carrying their respective commissions into execution, with all the expedition that was practicable, and every thing was very near being finished, when Mr. Pensive returned one day out of the city under great emotion of mind, and with such visible tokens of it in his countenance, as might well enough be expected from a man, whom much integrity and little acquaintance with the world rendered but an awkward dissembler. As there happened to be a great deal of company that day at Mr. Anguish's table, it was pretty late in the evening before he could communicate the cause of his concern, which was not without a mixture of joy to his friend and his lady. At his request, Olivia and Miss Henrietta were invited to a conference the

next morning, and as there was no longer any reserve amongst the members of this assembly, they came to a unanimous resolution, that under colour of giving an account of their negotiations, and making known to captain Courtly, the necessity of his presence for a few days in London; Mr. Pensive should go down to Sir Lawrence's seat, where, independent of all other considerations, the intelligence that he carried would have procured him a most welcome reception.

The friendship between Sir Lawrence Testy and captain Courtly was so intimate, and of so long a standing, they were so well acquainted with each other's humours, and so much inclined to mutual indulgence, that they had been hitherto the best companions in the world, perfectly pleased when together, and each considering their separation with regret, but they had been hardly three weeks now in the country, when they found their situation extremely altered. Poor Courtly could relish no rural diversions, tho' the good Knight took care to change them almost every day. Sir Lawrence saw this with a mixture of chagrin and satisfaction, he knew the cause and was not displeased with it, but he sometimes indulged his raillery to a degree that was very near unhinging captain Courtly's calmness. One evening when things had proceeded a great length, and the captain's countenance visibly betrayed that uneasiness he laboured to conceal, Sir Lawrence, contrary to his usual custom, called for a bottle of Burgundy, tho' the clock had struck one, and tho' Courtly peremptorily declared he would
not

not touch a drop, we shall see that, replied the old man gravely, and having ordered the butler to draw the cork, and place a couple of large glasses upon the table he bid him leave the room.

As soon as he was gone, Sir Lawrence locked the door, and then filling a bumper, captain Courtly, said he, I am a man of honour, and have formerly used other weapons, but at this time of life these are the most proper, this is Charlotte's health, and to her having a good husband, and he that does not pledge me—— is a coward and a rascal. Said Courtly, who filled his glass at the same time with great alacrity, Come, Sir Lawrence, said he, I know I am a fool, and I am sensible that you perceive it. Why now, says the old man the secret is out, when a man is really ill and peevish with it, there is no knowing how to please him, for my part, I have been breaking my brains to keep you in temper to no purpose, and therefore I was resolved the thing should come to extremities, that we might for the future know what we are about. Now, Sir, the business is over, and it must be your care to divert yourself; when you are in a sociable disposition, and can behave like a man, I shall be glad to see you; at other seasons, there is a dark walk in the garden, and a grove on the north side of the house, where you may sigh and meditate as other lunatics do. For my part, I bless heaven the fever is out of my veins, and therefore, except in your lucid intervals, let me never see your face. Courtly instead of being displeased, embraced the old man heartily, begged his pardon for the trouble

he had given him, and faithfully promised to follow his advice.

This regulation was of real use to Sir Lawrence, who now diverted himself with hunting, hawking, and shooting, with some of the gentlemen in his neighbourhood, and saw very little of captain Courtly, except at meals, and in the evening, when he endeavoured to be as chearful as he could. After all however things went but untowardly, when very luckily for both, Mr. Pensive made his appearance having rid down post. He had such an air of importance in his look, and was so desirous to be alone with his uncle and captain Courtly, that Sir Lawrence could not help laughing heartily, and even Courtly smiled, tho' he soon corrected that emotion in his countenance. I perceive nephew, said Sir Lawrence, that my keeping a private madhouse has reached London, but prithee do not keep us in suspense, for if you do, your brother cracked brain will lose all patience; you see we quitted the hall, on purpose to give you an opportunity of breathing your secret. Speak then, speak, for I see thou art ready to burst. The truth is, Sir, returned Pensive, that I have something of moment to impart to you both, and notwithstanding this reception, I presume my news will not be unwelcome. Your son is in perfect health, and you will speedily receive a letter from him. Speedily, said Sir Lawrence, why have you not brought it? No, Sir, added Pensive, the gentleman entrusted with it will not be at London till to morrow. But I have received a letter from my father, with an assurance that he has sent me home effects to the value

value of three thousand pounds. Then you did not wait for my letter, said Sir Lawrence, because you had received your own, mighty well! gentlemen, this love is a most noble passion, here is my hopeful nephew without a spark of duty, and my sprightly friend without a grain of wit. Heaven be praised that I am not young enough to be a fool, or old enough to be a child! But, pray Sir, what is your message to Mr. Courtly? That his presence is necessary in town, returned Pensive, about the writings. I will set out post to morrow, said the captain. To morrow, returned Sir Lawrence, why there is an hour's day light yet, and the posthouse within a mile. Be pleased, Mr. Pensive, to return post likewise for my letter. By that means I shall get rid of you both, which cannot fail of being a great comfort to a man in his wits. Pensive, who was well acquainted with his uncle's heart, as well as his humour, gave him his way, and Courtly slipping out, ordered supper to be got early, which, notwithstanding his passion, was a great relief to Mr. Pensive, who had eat but three poached eggs during his whole journey.

In the evening after the cloth was taken away, and the glass had gone pretty briskly round, Sir Lawrence told his two companions that it was time to come to business, I mean, said he, to the great business of setting both your heads right again. As for you, Courtly, time will do the work without any assistance, but as for Pensive, tho' this three thousand pounds seems to have put him in spirits, it does not appear to me to promise much on his behalf, and therefore as it will be of little use to him, I intend to take it

myself. Old men love money as much as young ones do their mistresses. What say you, Pensive, this is the first money you ever had in your life, will you part with it for my good offices with lady Constantia? With all my heart, uncle, said Pensive, and with all the hopes that my father gives me. Very honest, indeed, said Courtly; and very prudent too, returned Pensive. So it is, added the old man. You lovers have no time to lose, and therefore I will tell you my mind in few words, that young rascal of mine has made my heart ach, and therefore I am determined to punish him. I purchased some years ago an estate of six hundred pounds a year, within eight miles of lady Constantia's house. You shall have that estate for your three thousand pounds, which will go very near making up the sum necessary to purchase Sir Francis Flimsey's manor that lies next to me, which is now to be sold under a decree for the benefit of creditors, and the payment of his sisters fortunes. It is better than five hundred pounds a year, and my design was to have married you to the eldest of those young ladies when of age, that you might be settled in my neighbourhood; but since you have made another choice I am content, and I would willingly see you so too. Why he is content, replied Courtly, and he would tell you so, if joy would let him speak. Sir Lawrence, call for a bottle of Burgundy, and lock the door again, I will try whether I cannot do as much in honour of Miss Henrietta as your knighthood did in favour of Miss Charlotte. Sir Lawrence called for the Burgundy, which the butler had like to let fall at the sight

of Pensive upon his knees before his uncle, which he concluded must be the sign of a quarrel; and this was confirmed by his being ordered to set a couple more at the door, and not come in. By two o'clock all matters were regulated, and the young gentlemen having put off their journey for a day, Sir Lawrence assured them, that as soon as he received his son's letter he would go to lady Constantia's, and endeavour to negotiate this other affair; and then, said he, Courtly, tho' you have had the start of him hitherto, Pensive will be the first happy man, at least if it is in my power to make him so.

Sir Lawrence was well enough pleased with the departure of his friends before his son's letter came to hand; he was conscious that he could not either read it, or speak of it with dry eyes, and he was unwilling to have witnesses of what he thought a weakness. It was very long, very respectful, and very affectionate, though at the same time it contained the best apology that was possible for a young man to make. Some passages in it however were a little dark; he spoke of the cause of his leaving his tutor as a thing that might possibly have come to his father's knowledge, whereas that gentleman had constantly affirmed he could never so much as guess at the cause. He mentioned also Lady Constantia's family in a very particular manner, which his father could not help remarking, because he had more than once asked his son which of the daughters he liked, without receiving any other answer, than that he was too young to think of marriage; but what he least understood, and could least digest, was an obscure hint that

this excursion would be attended with no expence, and that perhaps he would not be displeased at seeing the fruits of an industry, which might have produced a fortune, if he had not been the son of so good a parent. If the humility, tenderness, and good sense of the rest of the letter, had not attoned for this slip of the pen, as well as his circumstances at the time he wrote it, Sir Lawrence would have been highly offended. He was really a Don Quixote of a new kind, and was very intent upon reducing all his follies and vices, and to be suspected of avarice by his own child was what he could not bear, though he knew it to be the most groundless of all imputations. At length having read the letter thrice over, he called his butler, for he kept no steward, told him he had received a letter from his son, bid him set the bells a ringing, gave a good entertainment to his tenants and his neighbours, distributed fifty pounds to the poor of the parish with his own hands, and then set out for lady Constantia's, where he found the news was got before him by a letter from Mr. Anguish.

The reception he met with, and the congratulations from all quarters, were equally acceptable: Yet when he came to mention the business of his journey to lady Constantia, she seemed perplexed and uneasy. This nettled Sir Lawrence extremely, who, though he was one of the best bred men in the world, felt upon this occasion, that the giant Pride was not so thoroughly subdued as he imagined. Your ladyship, said he, can have no objection to Mr. Pensive's family, and methinks his person and temper ought to be

left to Miss Henrietta's judgment. In my apprehension therefore, the sole point upon which any difference could arise, as I find that differences may happen where interest is concerned, must be that of fortune. Methinks, Sir, said lady Constantia, I am consulted somewhat of the latest in this affair, and if you were in my case, I believe you would be of opinion, that in decency my consent should have gone before that of my daughter. Oh! Madam, said Sir Lawrence, if that be the difficulty, and the provocation stands only upon decency, that may be easily got over, since it is a secret to me that your daughter's consent is asked. If so, Sir Lawrence, said she, we are upon the level, and I should be glad to hear your terms. Sir Lawrence proposed them in as concise a manner as was possible; adding, your ladyship is to know one thing more; that I have submitted, to the very difficulty which troubles you so much, for my very obedient nephew has been three years in love without my hearing a word of it, yet your ladyship sees that I could not only forgive, but do something towards making him happy. You shall see, Sir Lawrence, said her ladyship, that if this treaty comes to any thing, there will be need of some forgiveness on my part also.

Upon this she called her servant, and bid him tell Mr. Beaumont that she desired to speak with him. Your ladyship will excuse me, said Sir Lawrence when the servant was gone, I thought I stood in need of no mediator in a point that concerned me so nearly. All men may be mistaken, returned lady Constantia, Beaumont is the friend of my family, and not a dependant
upon

upon it. At these words he entered the room, when she asked him for Henrietta's letter, which she delivered to Sir Lawrence. It was in every respect a very improper one, notwithstanding the good sense that young lady had shewn upon all other occasions. It was indeed full of humility and tenderness; but she avowed in it her passion for Mr. Pensive in very lively terms, and assigned, as the reason of writing it, what ought to have restrained her. She said she chose to do it before his uncle's sentiments were known, that no doubt might be left as to her choice, whether he had or had not a fortune. Sir Lawrence could not help shedding tears while the epistle was in his hand, and returning it to lady Constantia, said very coldly, Your daughter I see is determined. If you are not inclined to forgive her, Madam, you may add her fortune to Miss Charlotte's. Lady Constantia was very much moved at this expression, but Beaumont interposed before she could speak. If your ladyship will reflect, said he, Henrietta's temper is very much like your own. At the same age you had the same notions; while young people keep in the paths of virtue and honour, it is a dangerous thing to take exceptions at their spirit. I dare say Sir Lawrence thinks as I do. Who can think otherwise, old boy, replied the Knight, rising hastily out of the chair; and my sister Constantia, who I see would fain be out of humour if she could, instead of being angry with the girl for this letter, loves her the better for it. Give me leave, Madam, said he, to salute you, since your daughter is to be my niece. It was some minutes before that lady recovered herself,
so

so far as to be able to speak with her usual temper; but when she did, she told Sir Lawrence she gave her consent with all her heart, which, said she, you will the sooner believe, since Beaumont has prevailed upon me to signify this to Henrietta already.

At this rate, said Sir Lawrence, I might have saved the land that I have given my nephew, since he would have had his wife without. But however he shall have it, and for this letter I make Henrietta a present of the three thousand pounds. My son it seems is afraid of having a great fortune, or has a mind to have one of his own getting, I don't know which; but be that as it will, I shall trespass upon him for once; and now I have punished the rogue, as your ladyship says, I forgive him. I am extremely sensible, Sir Lawrence, said lady Constantia, of your honour and generosity upon this occasion. I had once thoughts of dividing my jewels between my daughters, but as Charlotte has no occasion for them, and Henrietta is the elder, I shall give them her all. Your sentiments plainly upon that, Beaumont, said Sir Lawrence. If lady Constantia desires them, said he, I shall speak them very plainly. Upon this her ladyship requested he would. Then, Madam, continued he, in my opinion, your first thought was best; jewels are no ingredient in happiness, unless they are made so, which by an equal division they cannot, and to leave them in a state of indifferency, is a point of prudence. I am of your mind, said Sir Lawrence, and yet I think Henrietta must have the jewels. My son perhaps may have picked up a ship load of them in the Indies, but
whether

whether he has or not, I charge myself with an equivalent to Charlotte; lady Testy's jewels new set will go near to acquit me of that debt. Sir Lawrence, said lady Constantia, let us put an end to this conference, for sure there was never so flagrant a breach of hospitality, as to rob a gentleman in my own house. We shall have leisure to settle these things hereafter. In the mean time I am to tell you, that I think it will be best to embrace Mr. Anguish's advice, who is desirous that these marriages should be privately celebrated at his house without any other company than Olivia and my sons, of which if you approve, my sister and Charlotte shall set out next week. To say the truth, returned Sir Lawrence, I am no judge of these matters, and your ladyship's entirely determines my sentiments. One thing only I would suggest, which is, that Mr. Beaumont may write to a friend of his, who is my counsel, to draw the conveyance of this estate, and to settle it upon the children of this marriage; when he has wrote such a letter, I will put three lines on the back of it, to signify that such are my intentions. Beaumont would willingly have declined this office, but Sir Lawrence declared, that having had no occasion to pen any thing of this kind before, and desirous that no time should be lost, it was a necessary service; he was obliged to comply, and this important epistle was dispatched the same evening.

By the end of the year every thing was successfully compleated, and lady Constantia had the satisfaction of knowing that her daughters were
happily

happily settled, and that the two families lived in the strictest alliance, as well with each other as with their common friends, Olivia and Mr. and Mrs. Anguish, who were as happy as it was possible for a couple to be, and that in the spring Mr. Pensive and his lady proposed to go down to captain Courtly's seat till their own could be put in a condition to receive them, the care of which was undertaken by Sir Lawrence and Mr. Beaumont. In their journey thither, it was agreed they should take lady Constantia's in their way, and spend a month with her, that she might have the pleasure of seeing the felicity of her children, to which she had contributed so much by her care and example. As for Calista, who was now alternately the companion of that lady and her sister, she became every day more conspicuous, from the charms both of her person and of her mind, and was equally dear to Mrs. Pensive and Mrs. Courtly, who expressed an earnest desire to see her as well settled as themselves, and so near them that they might still enjoy the pleasure of her company.

Such were in this case the happy consequences of a rational familiarity amongst the relations of a great family; which by contributing to form their minds, and to establish upon right principles the purity of their manners, recommended them to the esteem and affection of all who knew them, and preserved that invaluable and inexpressible delight that arises from an intercourse of friendship founded on the mutual love of virtue, and cultivated by those amiable qualities that flow from good nature and good sense,

sense, which double all the advantages of fortune, defend youth from danger, bestow discretion in advanced years, and lay up a reserve of pleasures that may alleviate the infirmities, and soften the cares that naturally attend the decline of life.

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